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PROPOSITIONS

OF

NATURAL *and* REVEALED

RELIGION.

VIZ.

I. The Being of a God, and,

II. His Providence demonſtrated.

III. The Extent of our Underſtanding with reſpect to the material and ſpiritual Parts of the Creation, and the Infinite Spirit, conſidered.

IV. The divine Inſpiration of the Scriptures proved.

V. The Doctrine of the ever-bleſſed Trinity impartially examined.

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THE PREFACE.

REASON and Underſtanding are the diſtinguiſhing characters of our nature, and deſigned by God for the guide of human life; whatever we do without it, is brutiſh; whenever we act againſt it, we make ourſelves more vile than the beaſts that periſh.

And if we are to conſult our reaſon, and to be directed by it in the common affairs of life, we are not ſurely to act irrationally in the choice of our religion, and in the concerns of the other world, which are of infinitely greater importance.

But then the reaſon of our faith is not to be drawn, either from the climate of the country we live in, or the numbers that embrace it, or the ſecular advantages that may attend it, or from the notions of our forefathers, or prejudices of education.

Though there are multitudes who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, that can give no better reaſon of their faith than what ſome or other of theſe topicks furniſh them with; which is, indeed, no better than all other religions in the world have to plead in the places where they are eſtabliſhed. And if in this part of the world it happens to be on the ſide of Chriſtianity, 'tis much oftner, and through a far larger extent, as ſtrong a reaſon againſt it, and the great ſupport of Mahometaniſm, and of Pagan and Popiſh idolatry and ſuperſtition, all the world over.

But the Chriſtian religion ſtands on other grounds than the vileſt impoſture, or elſe we could have no reaſon at all to embrace it. And our Lord is the ſole infallible guide and lawgiver to his church, to whoſe doctrines and precepts only, we owe abſolute faith and obedience, his apoſtles themſelves being only to be looked upon as the miniſters and ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and only to be credited as by their gifts and the miraculous powers derived from him, they taught men thoſe things he had commanded, and by his ſpirit had revealed to them.

'Tis indeed our unſpeakable privilege, that we have ſo clear a revelation from God for the reaſon of our faith, when there are ſuch numbers

numbers in the world that have only the light of nature, or the works of God, to reveal him; where, indeed, many of his perfections ſhine out very clearly; but the riches of his grace in Chriſt, that great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh, *nature does not diſcover to us. The truths of the goſpel, that are ſuch powerful motives to our duty, that are ſo highly encouraging in the practice of all virtue, our natural faculties, in the beſt uſe of them, could never have given us any aſſurance of.*

But God has made ſuch clear diſcoveries to us of his nature, and of the way of finding acceptance with him, and what we may expect from him, through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, the foundation of our faith and hope, as diſtinguiſh us from moſt other nations under heaven.

As for other religions, that have no reaſon to ſupport them, they who profeſs them are not permitted to examine them impartially, but required blindly to ſubmit to whatever is obtruded upon them, under the character and pretence of divine truth.

But we are allowed and encouraged to ſearch the ſcriptures, and to try the grounds and foundations of our faith; and, indeed, the more we do ſo, the better evidence we are like to have of it.

'Tis not an unaccountable implicit faith that we have enjoined us, as in Pagan, Mahometan, or Popiſh countries; but that which we have the advantage to perceive the reaſon of, and to be ſatisfied in ourſelves about.

I am firmly perſuaded that the civil magiſtrate, in every ſtate and kingdom, is impowered to puniſh vice and immorality, by what name ſoever men ſhould call it: As to which, though they ſhould pretend conſcience, it is as clear as light that they have none. And as for thoſe whoſe principles are evidently deſtructive of the civil government, who have ſubjected themſelves to a foreign juriſdiction, or who veſt the Pope with a power of depoſing heretical princes; thoſe who have decreed it to be duty to extirpate all ſuch as they call hereticks; or that no faith is to be kept with them; thoſe, conſequently, that can give no ſecurity to the civil government that they ſhall not diſturb it; thoſe, in one word, who are in conſcience, by the principles of their church, declared by general councils, eſteemed infallible, obliged to deſtroy all their heretical neighbours as ſoon as it is in their power to do it; it ſeems unreaſonable that ſuch as theſe ſhould, in a Proteſtant kingdom, pretend to all the advantages and immunities that are, and ought to be, allowed

to those that are, in all respects, of another spirit.

But others, whose opinions are not inconsistent with the civil rights of the community of which they are members, have, without doubt, a right to all its common privileges; because it is not in men's power to be of one opinion in all religious matters; and therefore 'tis inhuman to punish them on this account. There's as great a variety of capacities as there is of men; very few have like advantages of instruction and education; and a thousand circumstances may make me see a thing in quite a different light from what another does, and so entertain quite other notions of it, though we may be both in earnest in our enquiry: there are many things that may cast another man's understanding into a different figure from ours; and therefore it would be unreasonable to judge hardly of them that differ from us in the less matters of religion, supposing them to be in an error; but certainly it would be as great an instance of cruelty to persecute men for it, as it would be to punish them for being poor, or blind, or lame.

Yea, in matters purely religious, though of the last importance, none, I think, has a right to punish any person, whilst he professes nothing

that is inconſiſtent with the civil rights and properties of mankind; and the contrary principle would certainly fill the world with everlaſting jars and contentions, hatred and confuſion.

What the following pages contain, was not written with the leaſt intention to weaken our belief of the great articles of Natural Religion, which are the very baſis of Chriſtianity, but to let us ſee that there are an infinite number of truths evidently comprehended by the Supreme Being, and yet incomprehenſible by the moſt ſagacious man in the world. And therefore to aſſert, that whatever is incomprehenſible by us is falſe, is, in effect, to aſſert that all truth is by us comprehenſible; that we are capable of being equal to God in knowledge, and conſequently in every other perfection.

If any perſon thinks fit to reply to theſe papers, I hope I ſhall have no reaſon to complain that he writes under concealment, and without a name. And I now, once for all, declare, I ſhall think that gentleman beneath my notice, that is aſhamed to ſet his name to an opinion he avows, and would palm upon the world.

PROPO-

PROPOSITIONS

OF

Natural and Revealed Religion.

PROP. I.

EVERY ſenſe, as well as reaſon, both our own being, and every thing in nature abundantly demonſtrate, that there is a God; or one ſelf-exiſtent, eternal, immutable, almighty, all-wiſe, juſt, good, and faithful, moſt free, and in all reſpects infinitely perfect ſpirit: whoſe excellencies are altogether incomprehenſible by the largeſt finite capacity; much leſs can the language

language of men, or mortal apprehenſions reach them.

For ſomething muſt have exiſted from eternity, or 'tis evident nothing could ever have been. And

I. It ſeems no other than a plain contradiction, that there has been an infinite ſucceſſion of men, or other creatures, producing one another in an eternal progreſſion, without any original cauſe, to which they all owe their beings. That every part of this infinite progreſſion ſhould be dependent and derived, and yet the whole of it independent, unproduced, and without any reaſon of its exiſtence, though it may be the beſt plea the Atheiſt has to make, yet it carries in it too great and obvious abſurdity for any beſides him to maintain.

'Tis a truth beyond oppoſition, that mankind hath a gradual increaſe, notwithſtanding what war

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and famine, peſtilence and floods, conflagrations, and other ſuch cauſes, may, at certain periods of time, have interrupted and retarded it. This is evident from the hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* nation; from the account of the *Roman* Cenſus; and from the regiſters of our own country: where the proportion of births to burials has been found upon obſervation to be nearly as fifty to forty. Or let it be, as others have calculated it, that mankind ordinarily doubles in three hundred and ſixty years: or let the increaſe be never ſo gradual; *e. g.* one couple in an age, or any finite number of ages; this is enough undeniably to evince the falſehood of eternal generations of men. For upon the ſuppoſition of an eternal ſucceſſion of men, and one only to increaſe in any finite number of years, though never ſo great, the whole univerſe (ſuppoſing it to be finite) could not contain

the

the whole number of men, there muſt be now in being.

Perhaps it will be anſwered, that ſeveral univerſal deluges may now and then have happened and ſwept away all; except, it may be, two or three that have eſcaped and begun the world again.

But the anſwer is eaſy, if it deſerves any: for in the firſt place, the number of theſe deluges muſt have been infinite, or they will not ſerve the Atheiſt's turn, but ſtand in full force againſt him.

Or, 2. Theſe univerſal inundations, or other extraordinary devaſtations of mankind, muſt fall out regularly, or in the courſe of nature; or elſe ſupernaturally or miraculouſly: If ſupernaturally, this is to yield the point, that there is a God that orders theſe things: If naturally, then muſt they give us an account whence a quantity of water ſhall be fetch'd, that will be ſufficient

at

at once to drown the whole globe; and how it came to overwhelm the world, and that an infinite number of times, as there is a neceſſity of holding; and how that in an infinite number of theſe univerſal deluges, the human race ſhould never be quite extinguiſh'd. A man that can believe this, is well fitted to be an Atheiſt, who is really the moſt credulous creature in the world.

Firſt then, had the world exiſted from eternity, the whole univerſe had been long ago overſtock'd with inhabitants, of which there has been ſtill a gradual increaſe, notwithſtanding the vaſt conſumption there is continually, by war and peſtilence, or other diſtempers, and deſtroyers of mankind.

2. The Sun in the firmament would have been long ago extinguiſhed, if it had loſt but one particle of its light in any finite number of ages, which comes from

from its body to us, and never returns to it again.

3. The planets and comets, how inconſiderable ſoever the reſiſtance may be of the medium through which they move, yet long before eternal ages could have paſt, they muſt have been ſtopped in their progreſs, and univerſal nature in ruins.

Thus it muſt have been according to the ordinary courſe and ſtated laws of nature, from which the Atheiſt muſt ſuppoſe it has never once varied, had the world been eternal. But

II. Another ſort of Atheiſts give us this account of the world's production.

They ſuppoſe, that the matter of this world being eternal, it ſettled in proceſs of time, of its own accord, into this goodly frame, upon the meer caſual concourſe of its minute parts: and that the ſun,

moon,

moon, and ſtars, and all the great bodies of the univerſe fell blindly into that beautiful order, and preſcribed themſelves thoſe laws, and regular courſes, we ſee they all obſerve.

And that man, with all his rational faculties, as well as the inferior works of nature, was thus by meer chance, without the leaſt counſel or deſign, ſtruck out and finiſhed; when there is nothing occurs to our ſenſes, but what infinitely ſurpaſſes all mortal skill and comprehenſion. All the powers of nature in conjunction are not able to produce the moſt contemptible inſect or vegetable; but only to unfold, nouriſh, and increaſe the bulk of their ſeveral ſeeds, already formed with exquiſite art and wiſdom. What power, leſs than divine, can make the leaſt grain or plant to ſpring out of the earth, or bring any of the fruits of it to perfection? How many

wonders

wonders of providence, how many acts of divine goodneſs and power concur, and are neceſſary to the ripening the leaſt grain? The rain and ſun, 'tis evident, could not, of themſelves, produce any thing. But according to certain laws of nature, moſt wiſely and beneficially eſtabliſhed, they can only help to ſwell out, and unfold thoſe parts of vegetables, which for thouſands of years paſt, even ever ſince the creation, have exiſted: all the ſeeds, and plants and fruits that have ever appeared in the world, having been really contain'd in the firſt ſeeds of each kind: which gives us a moſt aſtoniſhing view of the exquiſite art of the all-wiſe former of all things; and demonſtrates the truth of that common ſaying, *Natura maxima in minimis.*

What plain marks of the divine Being and perfections are there ſtamped even upon thoſe works, that

that 'tis common for us to overlook or reckon deſpicable, and wherein the leaſt expence of art and skill ſeems requiſite? Yea every pile of graſs, and worm under our feet, to a curious obſerver of their admirable frame and make, muſt needs appear full of proofs of an omnipotent and all-wiſe being, that alone could create and diſpoſe every part and veſſel in ſuch order.

What evidence do we find of the exiſtence and unconceivable perfection of the Divine Majeſty in ourſelves, in the frame of our bodies; and eſpecially in the make of our Souls! How came we to be thoſe thinking ſubſtances, which no poſſible combination, or diſpoſition of the fineſt matter, nor any kind of motion, or modes of which matter is capable, could conſtitute?

How ſtupid are we then, if we are not, from one moment's reflection, or obſervation of what paſſes

in ourſelves, immediately led up to the great author of our beings, that with ſo curious a workmanſhip form'd our bodies out of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into our noſtrils the breath of life? And therefore this opinion of the world's formation, need now only to be propoſed, to appear at firſt ſight the moſt ridiculous of all fictions.

If we look upwards, what glorious witneſſes of an Almighty Being, are the Sun, Moon and Stars, in their various orbs and regular courſes, their immenſe bulks, their unconceivable diſtances from us, their apt ſituation, and uſeful influences, and the ſtated laws of their great Creator, which they conſtantly obſerve, containing ſo many wonders in them, and diſpenſing to us ſo many bleſſings, that the heathen world acknowledged and adored thoſe heavenly luminaries, as if they were themſelves Gods; whereas

'tis

'tis moſt evident they have nothing of Godhead in their nature; yet 'tis as manifeſt, they ſhine with glorious marks of a divine skill, that was employ'd in making them.

In a word, univerſal nature witneſſes againſt the Atheiſt. All the creatures in the world, as well ſpiritual, as corporeal; all from the human race to the loweſt inſect, from the vaſt globes of the ſun and planets, to the ſmalleſt particles of duſt, do declare their abſolute dependance upon the firſt author of all being, and motion and life, the only eternal and ſelf-exiſtent God, who out of the inexhauſted treaſure of his goodneſs, did, when it pleaſed him, give being to the world, both the matter and form of it; diſpoſing the ſeveral parts in infinite variety, order and beauty, all ſerving ends the moſt great and noble. So that from the ſtarry firmament, down to the moſs that grows upon the

wall, the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean, there is not any creature, but diſplays unſearchable wiſdom, and contains in it a world of wonders, cloſe ſhut up from the moſt curious diſquiſitions of the moſt prying mind on earth, which can enter only a little way within the ſurface, but muſt not think to reach the eſſence of any thing.

PROP. II.

It may with equal reaſon and certainty be concluded, that God continually upholds the world in its being and motions, as well as that he firſt made it.

For this ſtupendous fabrick, though deſigned for many thouſand years continuance, and put together with infinite art and skill; yet

yet cannot ſubſiſt one day, or moment, without the conſtant interpoſition, and powerful ſupport of him, that rear'd it out of nothing, to which it ſeems of itſelf to have a continual tendency, and inclination to return; and to be preſerved only by the ſame uninterrupted exertion of omnipotence, that firſt brought it into being.

And as the undoubted miracles that have been ſometimes wrought are an evident proof, that God has not ſhut himſelf up in the higheſt heavens, ſo as to have no regard to his works below; but that he has the reins of nature in his hands, and all its laws are ſubject to him: ſo theſe being only the divine will acting in one uniform manner (but when he pleaſes to ſuſpend or alter them) we have, every moment, as ſenſible evidence of a providence in our own experience.

I. There are ſome indeed will tell us, that the world, after it had once a being from God, muſt continue, till he by ſome poſitive act annihilate it, without needing a continual exertion of power to preſerve it in being. For, ſay they, put a body into motion, and 'twill move for ever, unleſs hindred by the air, or ſome other cauſe; or let it be at reſt, 'twill ſo continue, till ſome external cauſe ſet it a moving; or whatever figure it now has, it will always keep, till it receives from without a new impreſſion.—— Therefore 'tis one of the great laws of nature, that every thing perſeveres in the ſtate wherein it now is, till ſome other cauſe deſtroy it, and put it into a new ſtate.

1. 'Tis evident there is nothing parallel in the inſtances propoſed; for motion, and reſt, and figure, are only certain modes of matter: God muſt ſtill preſerve the ſubject

 matter

matter in being, or it could have none of thoſe modes or accidents for a moment, which on this ſuppoſition only cleave to it, till there is a new alteration made, or impreſſion given it.---Yea all the eſtabliſhed laws of the motion of bodies, whether they move in ſtrait or curve lines, can proceed from no other cauſe, than a divine efficacious influence, which, upon their impulſes upon one another, produces as much motion in one, as it takes from the other; or elſe motion muſt be a mode or accident, which paſſes from one body to another, which it could ſcarce do without loſing its very being in the way to it.

2. If the univerſe would continue to exiſt, till God by a poſitive act annihilates it, then the reaſon of the continuance of its exiſtence muſt ariſe from its own internal conſtitution, or a divine decree: if from the former, then I cannot ſee how the

power of God can put an end to its being and exiſtence. But neither can it continue in being, becauſe God has decreed the determinate duration of its exiſtence; for the divine decrees, without being put in execution by an almighty energy, can have no more influence upon any creature he ever made, either to continue its being or faculties, than his decree to make a world, would have inſtantly given it a being. For elſe it would follow, that the beginning and continuance of the world's exiſtence would be coeval with his decree to create the world, and to preſerve it in its being: and then if God from eternity decreed its exiſtence, it muſt have been eternal.

3. Could the world continue to exiſt without a conſtant almighty energy to ſupport it, then we might as well ſuppoſe it would continue its exiſtence if we could conceive it poſſible

poſſible for God himſelf to ceaſe to be. And

4. For what other reaſon can we imagine the world or any of its parts (ſince they are all precarious and contingent) ſhould perſevere in their exiſtence; unleſs by a continual act of the divine being, exerted for that purpoſe? From all which I think we may conclude, that the world is as wonderfully preſerved, as it was made; or that 'tis an act of the very ſame power that produced the univerſe, to ſupport or keep the frame of it together, which without a continual creation would every moment fall back again to nothing, or by the mutual claſhings of its different parts and principles be thrown into the greateſt diſorder.

II. All the communications of motion, by the impulſe of elaſtick bodies upon each other, are immediately effected by the power of an immaterial being, by which more

motion

motion is excited, than was in them before the ſhock. *Hugenius*[a] hath demonſtrated, among other ſurprizing properties of the congreſs of ſuch bodies, that if a ſeries of them were placed ſo, that they might impinge on each other directly, their quantities of matter being in a geometrical proportion; and if the leaſt is impell'd againſt the next greateſt; the quantity of motion will be increaſed in each of them to the laſt.

Now if there be a hundred bodies in the ſeries, and if the quantity of matter in each be double that in the former, the ſmalleſt in the ſeries being impell'd againſt the next greateſt, the quantity of motion in the laſt will be two millions of millions, three hundred thirty eight thouſand, four hundred eighty ſix millions, eight hundred and ſeven thouſand, ſix hundred and fifty ſix times

[a] *Vid.* Enquiry into the nature of the human ſoul, *pag.* 39.

times greater than it was in the firſt: ſo that if the firſt was impell'd with but as much force as the ſtrength of a child could impreſs, the force of the laſt would be inconceivable. And how then, ſays the learned author of the *Eſſay on the human ſoul*, is it poſſible to conceive, that ſluggiſh matter ſhould ſo prodigiouſly increaſe the quantity of motion in itſelf, without an immaterial power?

III. To what elſe than a divine impulſe can we aſcribe the gravitation or tendency of bodies to one another? There's no mechanical account, that can poſſibly be given of the univerſal principle of gravitation, and the ſeveral laws of it, whereby all bodies tend to each other, after a certain manner, and by a certain determinate force, which may be ſaid to be the great tie, ſupport, and preſervation of nature, or the preſent regular conſtitution of the world;

world; without which 'twould all be but one general chaos or confuſion, wherein no creature could poſſibly ſubſiſt. This, I ſay, is only owing to the immediate interpoſition of God, who has taken care, and abundantly provided for the ſubſiſtence of his creatures.

'Tis eaſy here to demonſtrate that there is no ſuch principle as gravity inherent in matter: or ſuppoſing it, yet it was impoſſible it ſhould have been the cauſe of that variety of motions, which we experience in the world.

'Tis well known, that gravitation, or the attraction of all the parts of any body towards the earth's centre, without its ſurface, is reciprocally proportional to the ſquares of the diſtances from its centre.[b] And within the ſurface, 'tis attracted with a force only proportional to its diſtance from its centre.

Now

[b] *Newt.* prin. lib. 1. prop. 73.

Now[c] if gravity was an inherent quality or property of matter, it muſt be the ſame in all ſituations. And therefore ſince it always differs in the various ſituations of bodies, it muſt certainly be the effect of an external cauſe: and what can this be but the influence of that being which at firſt made it?

The heavenly bodies, the earth, and planets, both primary and ſecondary, as they could never give themſelves being at firſt, ſo neither could they ever have put themſelves in motion. Nor can they now of themſelves continue a moment to move forward in their proper orbits (as I think is demonſtrable from the principles of true philoſophy) unleſs God continually interpoſed to retain them in the courſes where he firſt placed them, which of themſelves they would inſtantly deſert, and run ſtill farther from us, without ever more

[c] *Newt.* prin. lib. 1. prop. 70.

more viſiting us, unleſs God reſtrained them, and contrary to their natural tendency, kept them always circulating round, by that univerſal principle of gravitation, which muſt be reſolved into the continual interpoſition and influence of the divine will and power.

'Tis demonſtrated that gravity anſwers not at all to the ſurfaces of bodies, but exactly to their ſolid contents, which is a very different proportion. Now matter can act only upon the ſurface of matter; it cannot penetrate it; and therefore can, by no principle whatſoever, be the cauſe of this phenomenon. But there muſt be ſomething immaterial, that penetrates the ſolid ſubſtance of all bodies, and that exerts itſelf every moment in every part of the world, cauſing this natural tendency or weight of all bodies towards each other, which ſeems to be an evident demonſtra-

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tion both of the being and providence of God.

Nor can bodies by any inherent quality act at a diſtance upon one another, for then there would be action without an agent; or accident without its ſubject; which is impoſſible.

The exact adjuſtment of the projectile and centripetal forces of the planets, and the conſtancy of the motions of the earth, and other planets, and the ſun about their common centre of gravity, which is quieſcent: [d] That their centripetal forces or accelerating velocities are to each other in the direct ratio of their reſpective quantities of matter, [e] and the inverſe duplicate ratio of their diſtances from their centres, and their periodical times in the ſeſquialterate ratio of their diſtances, can be no other than the continual action of

[d] *Newton.* prin. lib. 1. prop. 69. and lib. 3. prop. 7.

[e] lib. 3. prop. 2, 11,

of the Firſt Cauſe upon the planetary ſyſtem.

All the [f] inequalities of the lunar motions, that render the calculation of its true place in the heavens ſo difficult, are entirely owing to a divine influence upon it; according to its different diſtances from the ſun. As

1. The [g] conſtant acceleration of her motion, when ſhe paſſes from the quarters to the new and full, and her retardations again by the like degrees, in returning from the new and full to the next quarter: And

2. Another inequality of the moon's motion ariſes from a greater degree of curvature in its orbit in the quarters, and on the contrary a leſs inflection of its orbit in its conjunction and oppoſition: from whence it alſo follows, that in the moon's paſſing from the

[f] lib. 3. prop. 25. [g] lib. 3. prop. 22.

from the conjunction and oppoſition to the quarters, the moon aſcends from the earth; and from the quarters to the conjunction it comes nearer to the earth again. All which inequalities are greater, when the earth is neareſt the ſun; and leſs, when it is fartheſt off. Now all theſe inequalities would take place, if the moon's orbit was a perfect circle in the plane of the ecliptick; but it moves in an ellipſis round the earth in one focus, with its plane inclin'd to that of the ecliptick, and therefore on this account alſo its motions are unequal; and its orbit is continually changing its figure and poſition: And the inclination of its planes to each other, and to the ecliptick, is always varying. The very quantity of many of the moon's inequalities has been calculated by Sir *Iſaac Newton*.[h]

Now from whence can all thoſe inequalities proceed, but from a different divine impulſe upon the

[h] Lib. 3. prop. 28, 29, 32.

ſun and moon, in their various diſtances from each other? So the attractive forces of the ſun and moon, that by the motion they cauſe in the ſeas, preſerve their waters from ſtagnation, and from poiſoning the air with infectious vapours, muſt alſo be entirely owing to the ſame influence of their great Creator.

As both ſun and moon, with all their parts, do gravitate towards the earth; ſo the earth and every particle in it gravitate towards the ſun and moon, in a reciprocal duplicate proportion of their diſtances: And the heights to which the ſea is raiſed in the conjunction and oppoſition of theſe luminaries, compared with its elevation when the moon is in either quarter, diſcovers the difference of their attractive forces to be as $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. So the tides are greateſt when the moon is neareſt the earth, and when it is in the equator, or ſhines perpendicularly upon the part of the earth in the middle between the poles. Now

Now from whence can all this proceed? or what can it be elſe, than the immediate action of the great Creator, raiſing the waters to different heights, as the ſun and moon change their poſition and diſtances, with reſpect to each other, and to the earth?

IV. Beſides the general attraction of the greater bodies of the univerſe already mentioned, the very minute particles of all bodies are endued with a ſtrong attracting force, which increaſes in a greater proportion, than a reciprocal triplicate, or even quadruplicate proportion to their diſtances, and indefinitely greater at the point of contact, or extremely near it, than at any determinate diſtance from it; and always in proportion to their ſolidities and ſurfaces, or points, as Dr. *Keil*'s theorems in the *Philoſophical Tranſactions* demonſtrate: Which muſt be alſo entirely owing to the

agency of an omnipotent cauſe, that puſhes the ſmall particles of matter to a contact with each other; and cauſes that firm coheſion we obſerve in many bodies. Which

1. A juxta-poſition of great bodies to each other will by no means explain; for though two poliſhed marbles are not eaſily ſeparated from one another, yet this is intirely owing to the preſſure of the incumbent air on their exterior furfaces. And,

2. 'Tis impoſſible that any bodies ſhould have a tendency to motion and reſt at the ſame time; to move in any direction, and yet to reſiſt all change of their preſent ſtate: wherefore the motions of the minute parts of any bodies, or their tendency to motion, cannot be any inherent quality or property planted in them; but muſt be the impulſes of an immaterial being. So what elſe can we ſuppoſe but a divine power to produce the wonderful effects

fects of elaſticity, and to bring back thoſe minute parts into an immediate contact, that by external violence are driven at extremely ſmall diſtances from each other?

It is well known, that a ray of light in paſſing obliquely from the air into a denſer tranſparent medium, will not move in the ſame line it firſt deſcribed, but come nearer to the perpendicular to its point of incidence, and ſo is turned from its ſurface; but in paſſing from a rarer medium, is bent towards it. This and that well known principle in Opticks, proved by many experiments, that whatever proportion the ſine of incidence bears to the ſine of refraction in any one caſe, the ſame proportion ſhall hold in all caſes; or that the proportion between theſe ſines will remain unalterably the ſame, in the ſame refracting ſubſtance, however different the angle may be, which the incident ray makes with the perpendi-

cular to the point of incidence: from whence, I ſay, can all this proceed, but from the immediate influence of the Father of lights, forcing the rays of light into a leſs angle with the perpendicular, as they enter the denſer medium; and drawing it towards its ſurface, and therefore further from the perpendicular, as they paſs out of it, in ſuch a manner, that the ſine of the angle of incidence ſhall bear to the ſine of the refracted angle a given proportion?

So the reflections of the rays of light can proceed from no other cauſe: And its wondrous inflections as it paſſes near the edges of ſolid bodies are certainly owing to the ſame divine energy, turning it ſo much out of a ſtrait line, as that the hair of a man's head, held in a ſmall beam of the ſun's light, ſhould caſt a ſhadow thirty five times the breadth of it. What leſs than the agency of an immaterial being,

being, can be conceived to raiſe thoſe ſenſible fermentations in ſeveral fluids, whoſe particles are ſtrongly attractive and elaſtick? Or to what leſs can we aſcribe the centrifugal expanſive force of the particles of air and fire, which when mixed with each other are ſufficient to raiſe houſes from their foundation, and to blow up the ſtrongeſt caſtles into the air, to rend the hardeſt rocks, and to give an incredible velocity to bodies of a prodigious weight and bulk, which in themſelves are unactive maſſes, and can never by any poſſible impulſe of any bodies whatſoever upon them, produce ſuch ſurprizing effects? Surely this can be ſuppoſed to be nothing leſs, than the immediate agency of a being that can do every thing on this ſide a contradiction.

The elaſticity of the air in which we breathe is intirely owing to a divine energy, it being held to its preſent denſity and ſpring by the

weight of the air above us, which, by the motion of the winds, is very often varied (as the Barometer demonſtrates;) but to what degree the air would expand itſelf, ſhould the ſuperincumbent preſſure be removed, is not yet by any experiment, or demonſtration, determined; nor yet into how narrow a compaſs it may be compreſſed.

Mr. *Boyle* in his *Treatiſe of the rarefaction of the air*, found it capable both of expanſion and compreſſion, to ſuch a degree that he could cauſe a quantity of air to expand itſelf over a ſpace ſome hundred thouſand times greater, than the ſpace to which he could confine the ſame quantity.

'Tis from the air's elaſtick and compreſſible ſtate, that tremulous bodies propagate their motions to it; and excite therein vibrations, which ſpread from the body that occaſions them to a great diſtance, and are the efficient cauſe of ſound,

or a ſenſation produced by the vibrating air on the organ of hearing. The particles of air are well known to have a power of repelling each other; and exert themſelves with degrees of ſtrength, reciprocally proportional to the diſtances from their centers: And the ſpaces to which they yield, upon compreſſion, are reciprocally proportional to the compreſſing weight.[i] All which ſurpriſing effects of the air can never be explained by any qualities inherent in its particles; for how can any particle, that moves forward with any degree of velocity, move backwards in the ſame line, without the impulſe of any other body, to give it a contrary determination? which is not here the caſe, unleſs we ſay it is attracted or drawn back by a force ſuperior to that which moved it forward; which can be no other than the Almighty Being that made it. And to this vibrating property

[i] *Newt.* Princ. lib. 2. prop. 23.

property of tremulous bodies we aſcribe the prodigious velocity of ſound, which Sir *Iſaac Newton* calculates to be about one thouſand, one hundred, forty two feet in a ſecond of time; or near thirteen miles in a minute.

And to the vibrations of the ſun's body we owe the vaſtly greater velocity of light, which from the equations of the times of the eclipſes of *Jupiter*'s Satellites, may be ſuppoſed to move in about the ſpace of ſeven minutes near ninety millions of miles from the ſun to the earth, which muſt without doubt be aſcribed to the immediate influence of the great author of the univerſe, who firſt gave and ſtill continues thoſe vibrating motions in both ſun and air, as are neceſſary to produce the great velocity of ſound, and the almoſt incredibly greater of light.

So the ſeeds of plants and trees, which the earth affords in a vaſt variety, and through whoſe ſeveral parts their proper juices are diffuſed, which

which only explicate the coats, and increaſe the parts which were all exactly formed before, till they grow up at laſt by the heavenly influences, (and by the peculiar and regular attraction of the ſeveral fibres and tubes, in which the circulating fluids are contained; always raiſing the contained juices to heights in the reciprocal ratio of their diameters) to a bulk ſo ornamental, and ſerviceable to us for the ſeveral uſes of life. This without doubt is another inſtance of the agency of an omnipotent Being; to whoſe immediate influence we muſt alſo aſcribe the circulation of the blood, and animal liquors, through numberleſs and almoſt infinitely ſmall tubes, every where diffuſed through our bodies, and branched into all poſſible directions, which no muſcular force, though ever ſo great, could produce.

To which I may alſo add the attraction of airy particles, that are

of

of a certain conſiſtency, neither too thick, nor too thin for the purpoſes of reſpiration, by the capillary abſorbent tubes of the lungs, to mix with the blood; without which the vital flame within us would be immediately extinguiſhed, and the circling fluid within our veins be rendered utterly unfit and unable to continue its courſe, and to perform the neceſſary functions of nature.

So the incredible force of the muſcles of a human body, which are extremely ſmall parallel veins and arteries, ſurrounded with nerves at ſmall intervals, whoſe coats are endued with an elaſtick power, cannot ariſe from any mixture of animal ſpirits, or any other fluids, with the blood, as Dr. *Morgan* has unanſwerably proved; nor indeed can any way elſe be mechanically explained, their powers being always greater than the weights they raiſe; whereas the mechanick engines can

no

no other way make the power to overballance the weight, but by increaſing its velocity to that of the weight, in more than a reciprocal proportion to their quantities of matter. The temporal and maſſeter muſcles, in drawing the lower jaw upwards, exert a force that is equal to a weight of ſixteen thouſand and twenty pounds;[k] the intercoſtal muſcles no leſs than a weight of thirty two thouſand and forty two pounds.[l]

The muſcle that bends the third joint of the thumb, in lifting up no more than a weight of twenty pounds, exerts a force nearly equal to three thouſand ſeven hundred and twenty pounds.[m]

And the force of all the muſcles, which only raiſe a man twenty four inches from the ground, is by the ſame great author demonſtrated to be more than three hundred thouſand pounds.[n] And

[k] *Borelli* de motu animalium, prop. 127.
[l] prop. 128. [m] prop. 126.
[n] prop. 175.

And the prodigious forces of many more muſcles I could eaſily mention; as particularly the Deltoides and Glutæus.°

Now to what can we ſuppoſe thoſe fine and tender threads, of which the muſcles are compoſed, can owe their ſurprizing ſtrength and force, but to the immediate influence of their almighty Creator, that brings their minute parts to a contact with each other again, after ſome external force or other has removed them at a ſmall diſtance: for this ſeems to be the only probable account, that can be given of this matter.

V. The phænomena of the magnet are ſurprizing. Its turning itſelf, when nothing hinders or diſturbs its motion, towards the north and ſouth poles; with a ſmall declination to the eaſtern and weſtern points of the compaſs: Their repelling one another, when their points,

° prop. 124, 125, ejuſdem.

points, that turn towards the north and ſouth poles, are placed to each other; and their ſtrongly attracting each other in a contrary poſition, in a greater proportion than their ſeveral reciprocal triplicate diſtances from their reſpective points: Their communicating their attracting influences to ſteel, and the dropping the northern point of the needle on this ſide the equinox, and its ſouthern point beyond it, and its turning freely on every ſide under it, are phænomena, that the moſt ſagacious man upon earth has never yet clearly explained. And though the motion of the filings of iron towards its poles, when they are brought within the reach of its attractive influence, ſeems to prove the circulation of inviſible particles, from one of its poles to another; yet it may be asked, what it was that put theſe particles in motion, and what it is that continues their motion, ſince they cannot of themſelves

ſelves begin or continue it. Theſe I think are difficulties too great for mortals to ſolve; and really we ſay nothing to the purpoſe, till we reſolve theſe phænomena into the immediate impreſſions of a divine power.

VI. The phænomena of ſeveral electrical bodies both ſolid and fluid, that by rubbing, or violent agitations, attract and repel other particles and globules, are no leſs unconceivable, than thoſe of the magnet, and ſeem to be attended with ſome circumſtances, which I deſpair of ever being able to reconcile with the known laws of matter and motion. Indeed why they attract ſome particles of matter, and repel others at the ſame time, may be ſafely aſcribed to the agency of an Almighty Being; but ſcarce, I think, to any other cauſe.

VII. Nor does it ſeem at all probable, that our ſouls ſhould have an eſſential or native power to move our

our bodies; as Dr *Watts*, I think, has ſufficiently proved.

It would ſeem very ſtrange, if our ſouls were the immediate phyſical cauſes of thoſe muſcular contractions, that enable them to act with ſuch prodigious forces as I have juſt now deſcribed, that they ſhould never have the leaſt conſciouſneſs of the manner of ſuch productions.

Whence is it, that our ſouls appear to move the muſcular parts of our bodies only, and not to be able to move their other parts, or give the leaſt motion to their ſeveral fluids, or to promote or obſtruct any of the glandular ſecretions, that are abſolutely neceſſary to our health and preſervation? From all which it ſeems, I ſay, moſt probable, that our ſouls are not the proper movers of our bodies, or any of their parts, but only occaſion thoſe motions, which ſerve the uſes of the animal life, and of which God himſelf is the immediate au-

thor. So that we may truly ſay with the learned author of *The impartial enquiry*,[p] that though our feet practiſe all the ſteps of a dance, and our fingers readily perform their parts at a muſical concert; yet then we may well doubt, whether we are better acquainted with the nature and action of the power which impreſſes and governs their motions, than with that which regulates the courſes of the ſtars. The manner indeed of the infinite Spirit's operating on matter, is, I confeſs, to me incomprehenſible: but yet 'tis as certain, as that the heavenly bodies, and innumerable others exiſt, that their motions were at firſt impreſſed by God, or they could never have had any motion.

[p] Pag. 63.

PROP.

PROP. III.

We know little of the material, and leſs of the ſpiritual parts of the creation; and leaſt of all, of the nature and perfections of the infinite Spirit.

Our knowledge in this world is very imperfect, and 'tis but a little that falls under the notice of the moſt ſagacious man in the world, in compariſon of what is intirely concealed from him, and quite out of the reach and ken of his preſent ſenſe and underſtanding. And what he has form'd ſome conceptions of, yet how far is he from comprehending, or being able to ſurmount the numberleſs difficulties, that do here obſtruct his progreſs to a perfect and thorough knowledge, even of any thing? Our ſenſes were given us, to guard us from the more threatning dangers

that ſurround us, and that we may know ſomewhat of the relation of bodies to ourſelves, as far as our happineſs is concerned in that enquiry; but not to enable us to diſcover the contexture of their minute inſenſible parts, which conſtitute the innumerable kinds of bodies, in the mixture of which ſuch a wondrous variety of effects is produced, from which the ſecondary, ſenſible qualities, as they are called, that contain ſo great a part of the whole number of our ideas, are derived. And therefore,

I. Every thing that ſurrounds us, or affects any one of our ſenſes, has ſomething deeper in it than we can ever hope to fathom, till we are releaſed from the dark priſon of our bodies, and tranſlated to the world of light, where we ſhall be bleſt with brighter views, and more mature conceptions of what is now ſurrounded with impenetrable darkneſs.

'Tis

'Tis true, many of the wonderful works of God are within conſtant view, and his eternal power and Godhead may be diſcovered by thoſe veſtiges or footſteps of the divine perfections, which 'tis ſo eaſy to trace, that none but the moſt ſtupid and unobſervant can poſſibly overlook, or not diſcern them. But how ſmall a part of the creation falls under our cognizance? The far greater part is ſo remote from us, as to be hid from the notice of every ſenſe. Of thoſe objects which are nearer, and of which we have therefore ſome perception, yet what thing is there, whoſe eſſence, or abſolute nature is at all underſtood by us? The moſt inconſiderable vegetable, how little do we know of its admirable make and beauty? How many of its virtues may ſtill remain a ſecret to us, even after the moſt accurate ſearches of the greateſt naturaliſt of our own times? And if every plant, yea clod of earth, that we tread

under our feet, contains ſuch unfathomable depths, and has ſo much in it, that's ſtill like to be unknown to the moſt curious enquirer; we have yet a greater world of wonders, wrapt up in every animal; which are creatures of the moſt exquiſite frame, and which have myſteries in their make, that will puzzle all the enquiries of mortals.

And though it muſt be granted, that with reſpect to the vaſt bodies of the univerſe, within our own ſyſtem, the preſent age have made far greater diſcoveries, than all that have gone before it; yet the firſt principles of that noble ſcience depend only on the conſtant agency of a divine providence: without which, the celeſtial motions (as I have ſhewn in the ſecond propoſition) could never be accounted for.

Yet ſtill the philoſophy of the leſs bodies of the univerſe (as being far more complex, and involved) may be reckoned a deſperate, or next

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to an impoſſible attempt, as the far greater part of their properties lie in the dark, and far remote from our knowledge. We have no other than a general idea of ſubſtance, or of ſomething, we know not what, that is the ſupport of innumerable modes or accidents.

II. As to our ſouls, though we know they are beings of a more excellent nature than our bodies, and of an immortal exiſtence by the will of God; that they act, perceive, and either cauſe or occaſion the motion of our bodies; yet after what manner they act, or how their perceptions are formed, and much more what their real eſſences are, muſt be altogether beyond our comprehenſion.

How wretchedly confuſed are our conceptions of our own compoſition! We are conſcious that we think and act freely, that there is ſome active principle within us; and 'tis alſo moſt probable that our

thoughts and actions flow from an uncompounded principle: but how this ſubtil and inviſible principle is tied to, or animates ſubſtances of ſo groſs a compoſition as our bodies are, we cannot comprehend. Nor can we ever expect to be able in this benighted ſtate of ours, and whilſt our ſouls are locked up, as it were, in the priſon of our bodies, to explain in what manner our volitions affect them, when they are changed from reſt to motion, or from one degree of motion to another; or by what means, and in what manner, our bodies, when moved, affect our ſouls with the moſt ſenſible impreſſions of pleaſure or pain in a vaſt variety: or how it comes to paſs, that our imaginations, memory, and even pureſt intellections have ſuch a vaſt dependance upon our bodily conſtitutions: or how the powers and faculties of our ſouls improve, as our bodily organs are enlarged, and the ſeveral parts of this

this wondrous fabrick are expanded; and on the other hand, impair and decay, as our bodies are broken, and worn out with age and innumerable other cauſes. We ſee when the exquiſitely fine threads or nerves that compoſe a great part of the brain (to which our active immortal principle ſeems to be more immediately united) are hurt, or any way diſordered by diſtempers, or any ſhocking accident, how ſoon the acuteſt conceptions are clouded and obſcured; and the brighteſt genius expires in madneſs, diſtraction, or downright idiocy. Any violent paſſion or emotion, even about the vaineſt trifles, what a ſtrange diſorder and confuſion does it often occaſion! and how miſerably perplexed are our apprehenſions at ſuch times! And when our paſſions are immoderate, I had almoſt ſaid, they ſcarce leave us the exerciſe of our reaſon in any matter whatſoever.

Now

Now what man ever pretended to give us a mechanical ſolution of theſe ſtrange and unhappy effects of our bodies upon that active principle that is lodged within them? Indeed the more we think of our ſelves, the more we are at a loſs what to think of ourſelves: and I know not whether we may not as eaſily conceive the world's creation, as the production of a ſingle thought. We may learn from hence how limited our faculties are, and how little able we are to dive into the nature of our own or other ſpirits. I think we are forced to grant, we can frame to ourſelves no better poſitive idea of a ſpiritual nature or eſſence, than by matter ſubtilized, refined, and exalted to the greateſt degree imaginable; which yet has no more in it of the real nature of ſpirit, than any matter of the groſſeſt compoſition. Nothing is more evident, I ſay, than that we have no direct poſitive idea of ſeparate ſpirits,

rits, and their properties. For ſuch ideas muſt proceed either from ſenſation or reflection. They could never be derived from ſenſation, becauſe they can't be the objects of any of our ſenſes; nor by reflection on our ideas, becauſe all the ideas of embodied ſpirits depend on material organs, and cannot be formed without them, whilſt they continue united to matter. But how can we know that the ideas of ſeparate ſouls are the ſame with the pureſt of our preſent ideas? But if whilſt our ſouls are embodied, we had any proper direct ideas of our pureſt perceptions and volitions; we might then conceive, and therefore explain, how our ſouls (ſuppoſing them extended, which is I think now the common opinion) move themſelves, when they will, or act; or otherwiſe, how they act without motion; neither of which, I think, are to be accounted for. And it would then be no difficult matter to explain the

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manner of our perceptions, or how God operates upon our minds in all our ideas of ſenſation: which I think we muſt grant to be yet inexplicable.

We know not by what name to call our very conſciouſneſſes: if they are modes, or actions, and if we are conſcious of all our actions, this will run us into the abſurdity of aſſerting an infinite number of conſcious acts for every action that we are conſcious of.

Nor can we conceive them to be the eſſences, or eſſential properties of our ſouls: for 'tis certain that we are never conſcious, but when we think or act, and 'tis highly probable that thought and will are not the inſeparable concomitants of our exiſtence.

And ſince we have no ideas, repreſentations, or divine impreſſions made in our minds, of our ideas of ſenſible objects, it evidently follows that we can never be conſcious of

ſuch

ſuch ideas, and therefore can have no poſitive or direct ideas of our ſouls, or their operations.

Indeed if we knew any thing of the eſſence of our ſoul, or the manner of its perceptions and volitions, we might then without doubt determine whether it is commenſurate to the whole body, or only to a part of it, or none at all; which difficulty we can by no means reſolve.

For if it is co-extended with our whole, or a part of our bodies; ſince our bodies, and every part of them are infinitely diviſible, our ſouls muſt alſo be infinitely diviſible by the divine power at leaſt; and their perceptions and volitions being co-extended with their ſubſtance, muſt be infinitely diviſible in the ſame manner; and every thought might then be reſolved into an infinite number of thoughts; and every one of the actions of our ſouls would be diviſible in the ſame proportion.

It would from hence alſo follow, that the aggregate of every thought would

would be the ſum of its reſpective portions of thought, commenſurate to all the poſſible parts of the ſoul; and how then could we conceive it to be one individual numerical thought?

Nor can I apprehend how ſouls can exiſt, and yet neither be eſſentially preſent with our bodies, nor abſent from them; neither in reſpect of place, limited or unlimited. 'Tis like to remain a myſtery how our ſouls, which are ſpirits, are united to our bodies; how thought, underſtanding, and will; that which is ſo entirely of a different nature, can be link'd to a clod of earth, dull paſſive matter, or operate upon it, and communicate motion to it by impulſe, without the leaſt ſolidity. One would eaſily imagine an immaterial being ſhould penetrate the body it animates, but we cannot poſſibly conceive it ſhould ever move it.

III. As

III. As to God himſelf, we cannot form the leaſt direct idea of his infinite eſſence and perfections, or of the manner of his actions: we ſhould be Gods ourſelves, and infinite too, were we able to graſp infinity.

And therefore to ſupply the place of a proper idea of God, as he is in himſelf, we ſubſtitute the greateſt excellencies of his creatures in his room, and conclude them to be the beſt and apteſt repreſentations of his incomprehenſible perfections; which infinitely tranſcend the moſt exalted of what are in any created beings, and are far out of the reach of all human imagination.

God is an infinite ſpirit, and is it poſſible for us to have a direct poſitive idea of infinity? or when we have enlarged our thoughts to the utmoſt of our capacities, are we not as far from any actual poſitive idea of infinity, as when we firſt began?

There

There is no divine property or act, but as it belongs to God, is altogether incomprehenſible by us; which I think the diſtance betwixt finite and infinite ſhould in modeſty conſtrain us to acknowledge.

Could we find out the real eſſences of all that vaſt variety of bodies and ſpirits that God has created, or could we ſurvey all their properties and qualities wi h the utmoſt exactneſs; it would by no means follow, that we could find out the Almighty to perfection, whoſe nature, and the manner of his exiſtence, are infinitely above all created beings in theirs.

Nor can we ſay, that the Infinite Spirit is of the ſame kind with ours, and differ from each other only in the degrees of perfection. God indeed is an infinite ſpirit, eternal, unchangeable, ſelf-exiſtent, almighty, and abſolutely ſupreme. And what reſemblance has any created being to thoſe incommunicable

cable attributes of the divine nature, as they are ſtiled?

And tho' the other divine perfections are ordinarily ſtiled communicable, as his wiſdom and goodneſs, juſtice, patience and faithfulneſs, and all God's other moral perfections, as they are called, becauſe theſe moral virtues and graces are in ſome ſenſe or other reſembled by ſome of his creatures; and in this image of God and conformity to it, religion is ſaid principally to conſiſt; yet indeed theſe and all other perfections are inherent in the divine nature, and belong to it in an infinitely different manner from what they are to be found either in men or angels, or any created being whatſoever. For,

1.) If angels and human ſouls are the ſame kind of beings with their creator, and differ from him only in the degrees of their natural and moral perfections; then this diffe-

rence is either finite or infinite: if finite, then God is not infinitely perfect: if infinite, then there muſt be an actual infinity of degrees, and conſequently an actual infinite number, which is impoſſible: for infinite degrees of perfection are as impoſſible as an abſolute infinity of numbers; and 'tis the nature of all numbers to be ſtill growing and increaſing to, infinity, but never to be compleat and abſolutely infinite.

2.) If the Infinite Being was of the ſame kind with our ſpirits, and only differed from them in the degrees of perfection; then ſome ſtep or other of this progreſſion of growing perfections muſt conſtitute this infinitely perfect being: but no poſſible number of growing perfections (which are ſtill infinitely ſhort of compleat perfection) can reach to an infinitely perfect being, which can no more

conſiſt

conſiſt of an infinite number of imperfections (and ſuch the higheſt poſſible perfections of all created beings are) than nothing multiplied to infinity can make any real number, or mathematical points any real quantity.

3.) All poſſible degrees of perfection muſt be to each other as number is to number, or one quantity to another, which can no more be the proportion of God to his creatures, than 'tis poſſible for him to diveſt himſelf of his infinite perfections, and to become a finite precarious being.

Where-ever there are degrees of perfection, though never ſo great in one being, if compared with others, the addition but of one degree would increaſe the whole ſum in that being, and the ſubſtraction of it diminiſh it in that proportion; which cannot, without the utmoſt abſurdity, be affirmed of a neceſſary, infinite being. For

Whatever is infinite can never by any power whatſoever be increaſed or diminiſhed; this is ſurely true of the divine nature and all his attributes and perfections; ſince God has all poſſible perfections by a neceſſity of nature; which therefore cannot admit of the leaſt increaſe or diminution. Beſides,

5.) To affirm a ſameneſs of kind (tho' in an infinitely different degree) in the perfections of God, and the moſt excellent creature he ever made, is as much as to ſay, that they are the ſame in kind, but in an infinitely lower degree of infinity.

6.) If any creature whatſoever could be of the ſame kind with its creator, its attributes and properties muſt be ſo too; being always in the proportion of their eſſences: and conſequently that creature would have ſelf-exiſtence eternity and infinity, with all the natural perfections

of

of the Deity, tho' in an infinitely lower degree, belonging to it.

But are not finite and infinite, created and uncreated, mutable and immutable, neceſſarily exiſtent and precarious, dependent and independent, comprehenſible and incomprehenſible, attributes as different from one another in kind, as any incompatible attributes can be from each other. And ſince all God's moral perfections are really as neceſſary, eternal, and infinite, as immutable, independent, and incomprehenſible, as any of his natural perfections; I can't ſee how any one poſſible perfection of the moſt exalted of his creatures, can be of the ſame kind with theſe. And therefore,

7.) I think nothing in the world can be more abſurd, than to ſay, that God has made any beings whatſoever, with perfections of the ſame kind with his own; for then it muſt follow, that they would be

immediate emanations from the divine eſſence, and not productions out of nothing, which they certainly are; or otherwiſe they would be as neceſſary in their exiſtence, as the eternal ſelf-exiſtent and neceſſary Being: which cannot be ſaid of beings that are the proper voluntary productions of an almighty power.

Surely that power can never be ſaid to be of the ſame kind with ours, that needs no materials to work upon; that can produce every thing with infinite eaſe, on this ſide a contradiction; and can no more ceaſe to be almighty, than God can ceaſe to be.

Nor can our knowledge be in any reſpect like his, to whoſe view all things paſt, preſent, and to come, are conſtantly expoſed; and that is as neceſſary as his power or being, and cannot receive the leaſt addition or diminution.

And now who will ſay, ſays the learned author of *the divine analogy*,

analogy,[q] that the knowledge of a pure ſpirit, independent of all matter; without any labour of the brains, or uſe of animal ſpirits; infinitely removed from all ſenſation; in no ſenſe progreſſive; entirely without the help of ſemblance or repreſentation; no way intermediate; and without the need of reflection, or metaphor or analogy; and for which human language cannot ſupply a ſtrictly proper term or expreſſion; in ſhort, a knowledge without a mind, without ideas, without thinking, without all reaſoning or deduction; ſuch as that the knowledge even of the moſt exalted being of the creation can no more be of the ſame kind with it, than he himſelf can be of the ſame eſſence or ſubſtance with God: Who, I ſay, will preſume to affirm, that ſuch a divine knowledge is of the ſame kind with ours?

[q] Pag. 311.

And the ſame excellent author has fully proved, that 'tis as impoſſible that the moral attributes of the divine nature ſhould be of the ſame kind with ours, as his natural perfections, or even infinite eſſence itſelf, from whence they follow.

Corollary.

From this propoſition I would infer, that the eſſential individuating principle of ſpirits is ſcarce diſcoverable by us, in our preſent ſtate of imperfection. For

1.) Why ſhould it not be as impracticable a task to diſcover the proportions of ſpiritual, as bodily eſſences, when they are equally concealed from our views and comprehenſions? We may as well pretend to deſcribe the exact relation of two unknown quantities to one another, as preciſely to define the eſſential differences of two immaterial beings, whoſe abſolute natures are

are equally out of the reach of our knowledge.

To fix this principle in their individual eſſences, is no more than to place it in we know not what, or in ſomewhat, of which we have not the leaſt conception.

Nor will the circumſtance of place in the leaſt remove this difficulty; for nothing hinders, but that two, or never ſo many penetrable ſubſtances, may exiſt in the ſame place, and yet be eſſentially different from each other, as human ſouls are, that are co-extended with the bodies they actuate, as moſt believe; or as they exiſt in God, and yet are as diſtinct from the divine eſſence, with which they are co-extended, as finite from infinite. Beſides, this would make an eſſential difference in the ſame ſoul, if we ſuppoſe it to be commenſurate to a human body.

For it may be asked, Whether that part of it (ſince it may be diviſible

viſible at leaſt by the power of God if it is extended) which animates, or exiſts in the head, is the very ſame numerical ſubſtance, with that which animates the other parts of the body; which it can no more be ſaid to be, than the places they fill can be ſaid to be the ſame with each other. Now,

2.) Suppoſing this, that a human ſoul conſiſts of as many poſſible parts as its body, which make one ſoul, by a ſtrict union to each other; I would ask wherein this union conſiſts? or what is its eſſential diſtinguiſhing principle from other ſouls?

Their conſcious operations will indeed make them modally diſtinct from each other, but their eſſential difference can never depend upon what is only the concomitant of their perceptions, and volitions: none of which (as Mr. *Lock* I think has plainly proved) are commenſurate to their exiſtence. Nor,

3.) Shall

3.) Shall we find it an eaſier matter to determine the eſſential principle of unity in the Divine Being. For though neceſſary exiſtence, almighty power, and other infinite perfections are the inſeparable properties of the Deity; yet if we conceive him to be eſſentially omnipreſent, by the ſame neceſſity of nature; 'twill be no eaſier matter to reconcile his unity and ſimplicity with the diffuſion of his eſſence throughout the univerſe, and infinitely beyond it; or to explain, how God in the leaſt portion of ſpace upon earth, can be the very ſame individual being with God in the ſun, or ſtars, or boundleſs ſpaces beyond them.

And ſince we muſt ſay, that God in the leaſt conceiveable part of ſpace, muſt have all the perfections of the Deity, (or elſe an infinitely perfect being would conſiſt of an infinite number of finites) I would gladly know what 'tis that makes God

God to be one numerical individual being in all the portions of infinite ſpace; or how to reconcile the ſimplicity of the divine nature, with any conceiveable principle of unity or individuation.

We cannot ſay that the divine eſſence within and without the univerſe is numerically the ſame, becauſe inſeparable in both theſe; for we may affirm as much of ſpace, which ſome believe to be a property of God himſelf.

But that ſeems to be impoſſible; for the ſame being muſt have the ſame attributes and properties: and hence it would evidently follow, that any aſſignable portion of ſpace, as a cubical inch, or foot, or yard, would be numerically the ſame with any other greater or leſs portion of ſpace, yea with infinite ſpace itſelf. It would be only commenſurate to a cubical inch or foot, or yard of matter: but yet co-extended with the vaſt bodies of the univerſe; and

and large enough to contain an infinite number of poſſible worlds without it.

PROP. IV.

Though the inviſible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen and underſtood from the creation of the world, which throughout bears a dazzling impreſs of his glorious perfections; ſo that in the darkeſt corner of the earth, they can have no apology, that either deny his being, or deny him homage: yet God has not left the world to the book of nature, or the direction of unaſſiſted reaſon, or to any light of natural conſcience, to lead them into all neceſſary truth, to reform and ſave them.

But he has made a much clearer revelation of his mind and will, which is contained in the ſcriptures of the old and new teſtament.

That

That this book is of infallible and divine inſpiration, is evident from the ſublimity of its doctrine, the holineſs of its precepts, the punctual accompliſhment of its predictions, the purity of its aim, and direct tendency of every thing it contains, to renew the nature of man, and to make him like God, and to advance the divine glory, as well as the good of human ſociety. The blood of thouſands of martyrs that have died to confirm it, and thouſands of miracles that have been wrought to atteſt it, and its wondrous efficacy on the hearts and lives of men, with other unconteſtable evidences, will not ſuffer us to doubt. But more largely:

1.) 'Tis certain that God may communicate his mind to mankind: for to ſuppoſe the great creator hath not reſerved to himſelf the power and authority over reaſonable creatures, ſo as to reveal his mind and will to them, and to make it their duty to receive

receive ſuch a revelation as coming from him, were a very high reflection on his wiſdom, and a plain denial of his abſolute dominion over mankind. But yet,

2.) No perſon's fancying himſelf to be inſpired, is a ſufficient reaſon for others to believe the meſſages he delivers, to come from God: nor can it be expected his teſtimony ſhould paſs for true, without more certain credentials of a divine miſſion. Therefore,

3.) There are ſome marks of a divine inſpiration, that would ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it from all impoſture and deluſion: which are ſuch as theſe:

1. A divine revelation neither implies a contradiction, nor overthrows any evident principle, and certain deduction of reaſon; nor claſhes with any former revelation duly atteſted; nor contains any manifeſt falſhoods, or doctrines and commands that are evidently and unalterably

unalterably impious, and immoral: as to which, I think, reaſon muſt be allowed to be judge.

All the miracles that were ever wrought, could not prove or give a man reaſon to believe, that God has ſaid, for inſtance, that 'tis poſſible for the ſame thing to be, and not to be, at the ſame time; or that all the angles of a right-lin'd triangle are greater than two rights; or that God is neither juſt nor good, nor worthy to be loved or obeyed. This can never be the matter of a divine revelation, nor is capable of any proof whatſoever. For the very ſuppoſing the truth of ſuch propoſitions, againſt the cleareſt evidence of our reaſon, would evidently deſtroy all certainty, and give us cauſe to doubt of every thing, and ſubvert all the foundations both of faith and knowledge. But,

2. When the doctrines, that are propoſed to obtain our conſent, are ſuch as tend to give us honourable notions

notions of God, and might have an happy influence upon our practice; when they all tend to the glory of God, and the dignity and happineſs of man, and are the higheſt improvement of our natures: Whenever, I ſay, ſuch doctrines demand to be received for divine, on the authority of evident uncontrouled miracles; or unerring predictions of future contingencies, or actions of free agents, placed out of the reach of human conjecture; we have then ſufficient evidence of their coming from God.

By a miracle I underſtand, a work exceeding, at leaſt in the manner of it, the natural powers of men: or that which is beſides the courſe and regular method of God's ordinary providence; effected by ſome inviſible agent, to advance the truth and divine authority of any doctrine or commiſſion. When ſuch works as theſe are not controuled and confronted by more and greater mira-

cles (as in the caſe of *Moſes* and the Magicians) that appear to be wrought by a power ſuperior to the former, they plainly prove the perſon, who is thus authorized, to have a commiſſion from God. For,

1.) Unſuſpected, open, various, and often repeated miracles ſeem to be the utmoſt atteſtation, that can be given to a divine inſpiration.

2.) We cannot determine what the natural powers of evil ſpirits may be; nor can we in the leaſt doubt, but that they can do works that are allowed to be miracles; or at leaſt ſuch counterfeit miracles, as 'tis impoſſible for us to diſtinguiſh from true and real ones; and conſequently would be to us the very ſame, as if they could work real ones. Yet the wiſdom, and goodneſs, and truth of God, will never leave honeſt-minded and well-meaning perſons, in a matter of this nature and conſequence, under an impoſſibility of detecting the

the impoſture: againſt which we have, from God's infinite perfections, the utmoſt ſecurity.

3.) If we cannot diſtinguiſh theſe doctrines, that are every way agreeable to our notions of God and his perfections, and confirmed by miracles, from impoſtures, becauſe evil ſpirits may work them; we can then be ſure of nothing, that we ſee, and moſt clearly perceive: for how do we know, that 'tis any more than a falſe repreſentation or fancy, with which thoſe evil ſpirits conſtantly take a pleaſure to delude us? Our ſecurity againſt ſuch impoſtures, which there would be no way of diſcovering, is the ſame in both caſes, the truth and goodneſs of God; which cannot ſuffer us to be thus abuſed in the right uſe of the faculties he hath given us.

4.) 'Tis highly probable that thoſe inſpired perſons wrought miracles to prove their miſſion from heaven, by whom we do not read

that any were wrought: or elſe that ſome other prophet, of eſtabliſhed authority, had born teſtimony of them; as *Malachi* to *John Baptiſt*, who did no miracles; which is the ſame thing. Or their firſt meſſages might not ſtrictly oblige thoſe, delivered without this evidence of their miſſion, to a full belief that they were ſent of God: but only be in the nature of a merciful warning and prediction; on the fulfilling which, their character ſhould be juſtified, and their credit eſtabliſhed. As of *Samuel*'tis ſaid, that *all Iſrael knew him to be an eſtabliſhed prophet of the Lord, when they ſaw that none of this prophet's words fell to the ground.* And *Jerem.* xxviii. 9. *When the word of the prophet ſhall come to paſs, then ſhall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath ſent him.* And *Deut.* xviii. 22. the proof was, the coming to paſs of what he foretold.

For

For though purity of doctrine, ſtrictneſs and integrity of life; no apparent intereſt to be ſerved by an impoſture; a perfect agreement with what others, who were truly inſpired, have delivered; no ſigns of an impaired reaſon, or a diſturbed imagination, to be perceived; or if the impoſture, if it be one, is in a very ſhort time to be diſcovered to their ſhame and detriment: though when ſuch circumſtances as theſe do all concur in a perſon that pretends to be inſpired, they may be of weight to incline a conſiderate perſon to receive him under that character; yet without miracles, or completion of prophecy, or deſignation of ſome prophet of eſtabliſhed authority (becauſe all the other ſigns may be counterfeited and ſo fail and deceive us) it does not appear that we can be obliged to give full credit (which ought not to riſe above the evidence for it) to any ſuch revelation. Though

ſuch circumſtances would oblige us to an attentive heed, and diligent examination and enquiry; and providence would require us to make the beſt proviſion for ourſelves, and to ſteer the ſafeſt courſe.

Generally, there were miraculous appearances, and addreſſes to the outward ſenſes of inſpired perſons, that aſſured them of a revelation; the matter of which, they had reaſon to conclude on the grounds above mentioned, was from God. Though I think it cannot be denied, that God may, if he pleaſes, reveal his mind and will to us in ſo clear a manner, by an immediate impreſſion upon our minds, as to give us at once the fulleſt aſſurance of any truths whatſoever. And they may be revealed to us by him, without any outward ſigns to perſuade us; though we are not able to explain ſuch extraordinary light and impreſſions, that we have never felt.

Though

Though it muſt be granted, that a bare perſuaſion of a truth, or a ſtrong belief of it, is in itſelf no evidence of its truth, or reaſon why we ſhould believe it; unleſs it be of ſuch a nature, as to aſſure us alſo that 'tis a divine impreſſion, which being an irreſiſtible perſuaſion, muſt infer the truth of it: or elſe we are neceſſitated to err, and under a fatal deluſion; which is not conſiſtent with the divine perfections.

But then how to convince an Enthuſiaſt will be the difficulty; who will argue from the ſtrength of his perſuaſion, for the reality of his inſpiration.

Now by comparing what has been ſaid, with the ſcriptures of the old and new teſtament, we may ſtrongly conclude, they are the dictates of an infallible ſpirit, of which we have the fulleſt evidence.

'Twould be too long to prove it, as to the ſeveral parts: indeed the

truth and divinity of the new teſtament, being eſtabliſhed, proves the ſame thing of the old.

'Tis impoſſible the Apoſtles ſhould have feigned what they wrote; writing of a matter of fact, affirm'd to be done in their own time; openly and in the preſence of multitudes of witneſſes: ſo that the impoſture (if it had been any) muſt have been immediately detected.

Beſides, their adverſaries themſelves own the truth of the greater part of their hiſtory. They had no intereſt here to ſerve; but ſealed the truth of what they delivered with their blood. A thouſand arguments there are to prove the truth of what they ſay; and from their truth we may infer their divinity.

So that we have the ſtrongeſt arguments, and the cleareſt evidence that could poſſiby have been given us, to induce us to believe them.

Should we ſuppoſe, for inſtance, that ſeveral perſons of a virtuous character

character came and told us, that they have a commiſſion from the God of heaven to publiſh a certain doctrine to the world, and to require us under the higheſt penalties to believe it; how ſhould we behave ourſelves in this caſe? In the firſt place, I muſt grant, that the thing is poſſible: all that believe a God, muſt grant that, if he pleaſes, he may make a revelation of his mind and will to his creatures; and in ſuch a manner reveal himſelf, as to give us evidence ſufficient, and to make it our duty to believe him.

I would therefore hear what theſe perſons had to ſay; and deſire them to produce their credentials; that ſo we might not be impoſed upon, but know for certain that their meſſage is from heaven.

Now all that the moſt incredulous Deiſt in the world could deſire in order to his full ſatisfaction, that theſe men are truly ſent from God, can be only this; firſt, to enquire into

into the nature of what they teach; if it be repugnant to the light of nature, or contradictory to itſelf; and ſo impoſſible, and utterly unworthy to be the matter of a divine revelation: we could not then aſſent to it.

But if, upon examination, we find this new doctrine every way rational, and admirably agreeing to all the natural notions we have of God, and of good and evil; if we find the very deſign of it to be the glory of God, and the improvement of our own natures, the ennobling our faculties, the peace and quiet of our minds, and the good of mankind: we muſt then allow, that 'tis poſſible at leaſt, that ſuch a doctrine as this may come from heaven.

But how ſhall we be aſſur'd that it did ſo? We could not here in reaſon deſire a mathematick demonſtration. It would be madneſs to expect

pect ſuch a proof as the nature of the thing is not capable of.

The moſt any man could reaſonably deſire in this caſe, would be, that ſome extraordinary concurrence, and alteration of the courſe of nature (ſuch as no human power could cauſe) ſhould immediately happen.

Whereupon, if in atteſtation of this doctrine, we ſee either the ſun to ſtand ſtill in the firmament for many hours together; or the waters of the ſea to divide; the deaf, and lame, and blind, and all diſeaſes cured with a word; and the dead raiſed out of their graves, and reſtored to life again: and this done not only once or twice, and in the preſence of a few, but often, and before multitudes; ſo that 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be any deception: I think ſuch a doctrine ſo confirm'd, is fully atteſted to be divine, beyond all rational ſuſpicion or poſſibility of impoſture. And if this be not confirmation ſufficient,

ent, it will be impoſſible truly to ſay what is; and we muſt ſay, that God cannot oblige us to believe him in any thing he ſhould be pleaſed to reveal, and that ſhall be brought to us in his name. It is a ſort of proof, that relies upon the goodneſs, and faithfulneſs, and wiſdom and veracity of God, who cannot fail us.

And if we ſhould be deceived here, I could eaſily ſhow that we cannot be ſure of any thing, that we ſee with our eyes, or hear with our ears; all knowledge relying on the ſame foundation, the truth and goodneſs of God, and that he cannot deceive us.

Now this is the very proof we have of Chriſtianity; we do not indeed ſee the miracles wrought before our eyes, in confirmation of it: but we can no more doubt the truth of what we have related concerning them, than if we had been the immediate ſpectators. 'Tis morally

impoſſible

impoſſible that here we ſhould be impoſed upon.

For thoſe, who publiſhed the ſcriptures, produced their credentials; and gave the higheſt proofs imaginable that they were ſent from God. And by innumerable miracles, our Saviour himſelf firſt, and then his Apoſtles, atteſted their commiſſion in the view of all the world, and aſſured us of the truth of what we have in this book reported: for we may be ſure, that the infinitely holy and true God would never ſet his ſeal to a lie, or ſtrike in with impoſture, by his own almighty power to confirm it, and ſo give it the utmoſt appearance of truth.

The Apoſtles could never be deceived themſelves, in what they delivered; nor deceive us; acting againſt all the prejudices of education, againſt all their worldly intereſts; oppoſing all the wit and power of the world; enduring the ſharpeſt trials; yet ever conſtant to their profeſſion;

profeſſion; ſealing it with their blood, after having propagated it by miraculous gifts of extraordinary aſſiſtances from above, through almoſt all the known parts of the world; which is the undoubted proof of the power of God attending them: and ſuch ſpeedy and otherwiſe incredible ſucceſs, of a ſmall company of illiterate fiſhermen, as plain an evidence, that they were only the truths of God which they publiſhed, and which we have faithfully recorded and handed down to us in the holy ſcriptures: which we may be ſure the providence of God would take care to preſerve from any notorious corruption, in points fundamental and abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation.

As we are alſo ſecured by the multitude of copies ſoon ſpread all the world over; whereby any attempts on ſome places, or by ſome particular perſons, would be eaſily detected; eſpecially conſidering the oppoſite

oppoſite ſects of Chriſtians, that ſoon ſprung up, and would be ſure to keep a watchful eye upon each other.

PROP. V.

There are in ſcripture divers high points of doctrine; tranſcending human underſtanding, either at firſt to diſcover, or, now they are revealed, to demonſtrate or comprehend how they can be: yet they are nevertheleſs worthy of full credit, relying on the ſacred teſtimony of infinite truth.

Of which nature we may eſteem the doctrine of the Trinity, and may fully believe, that though there is, and can be but one God, yet the divine nature equally belongs to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in a way, which the ſhallow reaſon of man may vindicate from the abſurd

character

character of impoſſibility and contradiction; which it can never be proved to be, till we have a direct idea of the divine nature and perfections; or of an infinite being, and his equally infinite perfections, and wherein the unity of an omnipreſent ſpirit conſiſts; or how the divine eſſence in earth, and in heaven, within and without the univerſe, can be the ſame individual ſubſtance.

I ſay, till we can do all this, 'tis as eaſy to reconcile a trinity of perſons to the ſimplicity of the divine nature, as his omnipreſence.

This is a myſtery that may eaſily be proved to be above our reaſon, but can never be proved to be contrary to it; and therefore we ought not for this reaſon to reject it, becauſe we are not able to comprehend it.

For how many ſuch myſteries are there in nature, that muſt then on the ſame account be diſcarded, which we

we either ſee, or can demonſtrate to be undoubted truths.

There are not many of the works of God, but have a thouſand things to puzzle us; and which thoſe, who have the greateſt inſight into nature, muſt confeſs themſelves in great part ignorant of.

Indeed, when we ſpeak of that which is infinite, we muſt conclude it to be incomprehenſible: not only becauſe of the imperfection of our preſent ſtate, but alſo becauſe of the infinite diſproportion there is between the object, and our finite capacities.

Indeed, ſhould any apparently abſurd and contradictory doctrines, as tranſubſtantiation for inſtance, be obtruded upon us, it does not appear, that we ſhould be under any obligation to give our aſſent, upon whatever pretence of revelation; for we can never have as good a proof, that this is a revealed truth, as we have already from our ſenſes, and

the moſt evident principles of reaſon, that 'tis no other than a notorious falſhood, which, if true, would indeed leave us no certainty of any thing beſides; but utterly ſubvert all the foundations of human knowledge, and take away the diſtinction betwixt truth and falſhood.

But 'tis not the leaſt prejudice to the truth of the great article of the Trinity, that 'tis incomprehenſible or above our reaſon; for even reaſon itſelf tells us, that whatever God reveals to us, muſt needs be infallibly true, though we are not able to comprehend it: And we need not at all admire, that creatures of our rank are not able to comprehend our maker, or unravel and penetrate all the myſteries of the divine nature. We ſhould be Gods ourſelves, and infinite too, were we able to graſp infinity.

Nor can we ever prove this doctrine to be a contradiction, or contrary to reaſon, or our clear and diſtinct

ſtinct ideas; whilſt we are forced to confeſs, that we have not the leaſt idea or perception of the modus, or manner of it; which therefore we are by no means obliged to believe, any more than the manner of God's eternity, omnipreſence, and ſimplicity.

We have nothing to do with the particular modes of theſe doctrines, or with laboured diſquiſitions to explain how they can be: we are only to enquire, whether theſe doctrines are revealed to us in ſcripture; extending our faith only to the utmoſt reach of our ideas.

Thoſe indeed, who oppoſe this doctrine, tell us, that to believe it, is to believe without ideas; to believe what we know nothing of; but this in the nature of the thing is impoſſible.

We may indeed, they grant, believe, that there is ſome general truth contain'd in propoſitions which we don't underſtand; and ſo far

our faith is rational, becauſe we know what we believe: but of the propoſitions themſelves, we can believe nothing particularly, becauſe we underſtand nothing. But,

1. What is it more than a general idea, that we have of the real eſſence of our ſouls? Their co-extenſion with our bodies, or any part of them (as I have already hinted) is attended with inſuperable difficulties, if not apparent contradictions. And to affirm they are no where, is to aſſert ſomewhat of which we cannot have the leaſt determinate idea. Nor,

2. Have we more than a general idea of the divine ſimplicity, eternity, and omnipreſence. Do not all our particular ways of explaining theſe attributes, ſeem to imply no leſs than a contradiction? For,

1.) The ſimplicity of an omnipreſent being, infinitely extended, exceeds our comprehenſion; or without extenſion, parts or place, appears

to

to be a direct contradiction to all our ideas. And

2.) What ſeeming contradictions may a man fancy to himſelf in any aſſignable notion of eternity? To conceive in an eternal paſt duration, a ſucceſſion of ages already paſt, to which no finite number of ages bears the leaſt proportion, or of which it can't properly be call'd a part, has certainly greater difficulties in it, than can be raiſed from the doctrine of the trinity; and never to be reconciled to any idea, we can poſſibly form of duration.

The notion of an eternal indiviſible point, or everlaſting inſtant, commenſurate to all the periods of time, has plain inconſiſtencies in it. And an eternity conſiſting of an actual infinite number of ſucceſſive moments of duration appears no leſs impoſſible. And,

3.) The divine omnipreſence we can never pretend to explain, without running ourſelves into repug-

nancies we can never reconcile. If we ſuppoſe the divine eſſence to be every where, like the ſmalleſt point, we know not what we mean, and the notion is full of contradictions: for then their would be as many Gods as there are points in the univerſe, and the infinite ſpaces beyond it: and yet this infinite number of Gods would be but one; ſince the very ſame numerical being would be in every one of theſe infinite points: and the ſame being would at the ſame time be confined, and unconfined; or finite and infinite. Or if we ſuppoſe the divine eſſence to be infinitely extended, this hypotheſis is alſo clogg'd with inſuperable difficulties. It ſeems to be directly contrary to the divine ſimplicity. For the divine eſſence commenſurate to the earth or ſun, or any other part of the univerſe, if it is not a part, it muſt be the whole infinitely extended eſſence; which is impoſſible, ſince finite and infi-

nite

nite extenſion are infinitely different from each other.

And if 'tis only a conceivable part of the whole divine being, it muſt have all poſſible perfections in it; and therefore be as truly God, as the whole infinitely extended being is; but yet being a limited extenſion, could have no other proportion to it, than is finite to infinite, which is really none at all.

If it be ſaid here, that 'tis no part of our religion, to account for the manner of God's perfections; but 'tis enough to have a general idea of them; I grant as much of all the particular ways of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, which is indeed above our comprehenſion. We cannot, ſays Mr. *Brown* in his ſecond ſermon at my Lady *Moyer*'s lectures, by any light of our own, perceive this doctrine to be true, but neither can we perceive it to be falſe. We can ſee no repugnancy in the ideas of one God, and three perſons,

affirmed of each other; any more than we can make out the connection between them.

'Tis impoſſible to ſhew, that one Godhead cannot ſubſiſt in three perſons; becauſe God is great, and we know him not. Therefore ſince there may be a trinity of perſons in the Deity, and the affirmation, that there is ſo, is not diſcernably falſe, we may admit it to be revealed by God, without ſuppoſing him capable of aſſerting a falſhood.

I own 'tis above our comprehenſion, to explain the real nature of theſe divine perſons, or what that neceſſary union means that conſtitutes them one ſubſtance, with the ſame attributes and perfections.

But if ſcripture words have any determinate meaning, and the ſame words do not ſignify beings of infinitely different natures; and if the inſpired writings uſe the ſame expreſſions for Father, Son, and Spirit, and give them in many places perſonal

ſonal characters; then we have no reaſon to diſtruſt the truth of this doctrine; though we cannot comprehend its modus, or explain how it can be: For we may elſe with as much reaſon deny both God's natural and moral perfections, ſince they are in him by a neceſſity of nature, and therefore are incapable of the leaſt increaſe, or diminution. But what conception can we have of perfection, that can't be increaſed or diminiſhed, by any poſſible addition or ſubſtraction? The thing ſeems to us to be impoſſible; though it is as certainly demonſtrable, as any propoſition in *Euclid* or *Apollonius*.

If we run into a particular examination of God's moral as well as natural perfections, we ſhall find it as much above us, to conceive them as they are in God, as his infinite nature and eſſence. For if they are all as infinite as God himſelf, and no finite capacity can bear the leaſt proportion to an infinite object; they

they muſt be every whit as inconceivable. What can we conceive of that goodneſs and mercy, holineſs and juſtice, that are commenſurate to God's immenſity, and yet altogether ſimple and uncompounded? Or how what of either of them that is co-extended with the divine eſſence, in the ſun, and moon, and ſtars, and infinitely beyond them, ſhould be the ſame numerical goodneſs, mercy, holineſs and juſtice with each other, is as hard to conceive, as for God himſelf to be the ſame individual being in all theſe: but yet if reaſon and ſcripture atteſt God's immenſity and all his infinite perfections, we are as much obliged to believe them, as we are that a God of infinite truth and goodneſs cannot deceive us, or oblige us to credit a falſhood, or evident contradiction. And by a parity of reaſon, if as far as we apprehend the meaning of words, the divine perfections are aſcribed to the

Father,

Father, Son, and Spirit; if we refuſe to acknowledge them as ſuch, we affront the divine Majeſty, by not giving our ready aſſent to what ſeems to be ſo plainly revealed.

Perhaps it will here be ſaid, that reaſon will demonſtrate that theſe attributes belong to an infinitely perfect being, though we know not how to explain them.

To which I anſwer, Whilſt the doctrine of the Trinity can never be proved to be contrary to reaſon, the many ſcriptures in the plaineſt terms aſſerting it, are ſurely a much better reaſon for us to believe it, than its being above our reaſon can be for us to deny it; for there is nothing more evident in the world, than that we are obliged to believe whatever God has plainly revealed.

And though reaſon evinces an infinitely perfect being to be eternal and immenſe in ſome ſenſe or other; yet it can no more point out any poſſible way of explaining thoſe attributes,

tributes, than the Trinity itſelf. And therefore what is no objection in one caſe, cannot be in the other: 'tis abundantly ſufficient that the truth of both theſe are ſome way or other plainly revealed, by one who is truth itſelf and cannot deceive us.

We have no more reaſon to diſtruſt the evidence of a plain revelation, than that of our reaſon or ſenſes, becauſe both depend upon the divine veracity; and if we may be impoſed upon, and deluded in one caſe, we may be in another; and then there will ſoon be an end of all certainty, even in the moſt evident things in the world; and we ſhould then be obliged to believe nothing at all.

Indeed the works of God, as one tells us, are full of myſtery; and then how can the eſſence of God be revealed without a myſtery? or how could the doctrines relating to an incomprehenſible being repreſent

it

it truly, if they were level to our comprehenſion?

The beſt notions, continues he, we can form of a Deity, do ariſe from the utmoſt imagination we can form of the higheſt perfections, natural, moral, and intellectual, under the unutterable conception of eternity and infinity. But till we can find the proportion between finite and infinite, between time and eternity; and argue ſtrictly from viſible to inviſible, and from compounded to pure uncompounded eſſence; we cannot preſume to argue what the divine nature is.

God himſelf, and all his attributes are one incomprehenſible myſtery, which we ſhall never be able to conceive, till a finite mind can graſp infinity, or ſuch narrow ſouls as ours find out the Almighty to perfection.

And therefore it can never be a good reaſon, why we ſhould diſbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity, becauſe

becauſe 'tis incomprehenſible; unleſs we could prove it to be impoſſible: which will not be done, till any one certain principle of individuation is fix'd.

And though any particular known way of explaining it, may be proved to carry a contradiction in it; yet the main doctrine may remain unſhaken, and altogether independent of it.

And for my part, I lay no more ſtreſs upon any one particular explication of it, than I do upon any explanation that has ever yet been given of God's ſimplicity, eternity and immenſity; and am not aſhamed to confeſs my ignorance of both the one and the other.

But before I proceed to the main argument of this controverſy, I would a little more particularly conſider a diſtinction, which is Mr. *Lock*'s [r] as well as mine, and of the laſt

[r] *Eſſay on Human Underſtanding*, page 313, Vol. II. Ed. 8vo.

laſt importance in it, betwixt a thing's being above our reaſon, and contrary to it. There being many things, ſaith he, wherein we have very imperfect notions, or none at all; and other things, of whoſe paſt, preſent, or future exiſtence, by the natural uſe of our faculties, we can have no knowledge at all; theſe, as being beyond the diſcovery of our natural faculties, and above reaſon, are, when revealed, the proper matter of faith. Thus, ſaith he, that the dead ſhall riſe and live again; this and other like inſtances are beyond the diſcovery of reaſon, and are purely matter of faith, with which reaſon has directly nothing to do.

And to be contrary to reaſon he tells us are ſuch propoſitions as are inconſiſtent with, or irreconcilable to our clear and diſtinct ideas; which the doctrine of the Trinity can never be proved to be, till we have a clear idea of a divine perſon,

perſon, and till the incompatibility of three divine perſons in the Deity from hence evidently appears.

We ſay, there are three, to whom the nature as well as name, the attributes or eſſential perfections of this one God belong, whom the ſcripture ſpeaks of as Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. How theſe three are diſtinguiſhed from each other, with other curious and ſcholaſtick queſtions on this ſide; we are not, I think, obliged, nor perhaps either can, or ever in this world ſhall be able, ſatisfactorily to anſwer.

But they cannot be as diſtinct from each other, as human perſons, or as three men are, without holding three Gods, or three diſtinct adorable beings; which the ſcripture is far from warranting.

The ſameneſs in ſubſtance, or equality in power and glory, of theſe three perſons, of Father and Son particularly, is grounded on the ſame perfections, the ſame works, and

and the ſame honour and worſhip being aſcribed, or required to be render'd to both.

And ſince the ſecond perſon, we read, made the worlds, things viſible and inviſible; [s] and by him all things conſiſt, [t] which nothing leſs than omnipotence (as I ſhall preſently prove) ſeems able to have effected: and ſince there can't be greater power than omnipotence, it ſeems plainly reaſonable to aſſert with the anſwer in the *Aſſembly*'s *Catechiſm*, the Son to be equal in power with the Father, and conſequently equal in glory.

But before I enter on my arguments to confirm this important doctrine, I ſhall particularly examine the different ſchemes of the modern Unitarians, and prove them to be altogether indefenſible.

Their doctrine, in what manner ſoever we explain it, when ſtript of its diſguiſes and ſhewn in a fair and

[s] Col. i. 16. [t] *ver.* 17.

full light, ſeems contrary to all the reaſon in the world, as well as ſcripture.

Firſt, If we ſuppoſe the divine nature of Chriſt to be eternally derived by the power and will of the Father; either it muſt be from a ſubſtance diſtinct from God the Father, or elſe from the Father's own eſſence, or from nothing.

If out of a diſtinct ſubſtance from God the Father, then,

That ſubſtance muſt be before him; and ſo he could not be from eternity:

Or it muſt be produced from ſome other ſubſtance, or out of nothing, which in the laſt reſult of things would be equivalent to the Son's production out of nothing.

But it ſeems a contradiction to affirm that the divine nature of the Son of God was *eternally* derived from nothing. For,

1.) If

1.) If it was ever in any aſſignable period of eternity *nothing*, it could not exiſt from eternity: or,

2.) An eternal voluntary effect of almighty power ſeems to be an eternal contradiction: for whilſt it was nothing, that divine energy, that produced it, was not exerted, and therefore could not be eternal. And,

3.) 'Tis impoſſible to conceive of a voluntary action of any agent whatſoever, that has neither beginning nor end; for the effect of an action, that never had a beginning, is not yet begun, or could never have begun to exiſt: as the learned author of *The enquiry into the nature of the human ſoul* reaſons; every action muſt have a beginning and an end; theſe are included in the conception of an action; for if it were without a beginning, the thing is not yet begun, or never was begun; and what was never begun, cannot be now ended; as the pro-

duction of matter (and by a parity of reaſon, any other created being) is. The denying theſe limits to action amounts ſtill to an abſolute negation of it. And to ſay matter, or indeed any other being, was produced without action, is as much as to ſay, it was effected without agency or efficiency.

4.) It ſeems impoſſible to conceive an effect coeval with its voluntary cauſe, for the power of creating muſt be prior to the thing created; and whatever is poſterior to another, cannot be ſaid to have exiſted from eternity.

I know it is ſaid, that if God could not have produced his Son from eternity, then he muſt be a whole eternity without the power of creating him; and there muſt have been ſome cauſe, either external or internal, to hinder him from eternity.

To which the anſwer is obvious, that creation implies the bringing a thing

thing from non-exiſtence into being: but 'tis a contradiction to ſuppoſe any thing to have always exiſted, which was once in a ſtate of non-exiſtence: and almighty power itſelf cannot do a contradiction.

'Tis granted that God had a power from eternity of creating the univerſe of beings in time; but it would by no means follow, that thoſe beings could be eternal, whoſe creation certainly implies that once they did not exiſt.

If we ſay, that the Son of God was derived from eternity, by the power and will of God, from his own eſſence; then he would be neceſſary, as ſharing in his Father's eſſence; which cannot but be ſo, and yet contingent and precarious, as the reſult of meer will and pleaſure.

Hereby a ſubſtance would be derived from the Father's eſſence; and yet a pure voluntary derivation; a precarious nature, that is liable to a total diſſolution; which would in-

fer a ſtrange compoſition in an uncompounded, unchangeable nature. It is indeed to affirm, that the divine eſſence is both derived and underived, finite and infinite, neceſſary and contingent, ſupreme and ſubordinate, immortal and eternal, and yet liable to death and annihilation. What a heap of abſurdities are here!

Secondly, If we ſay with others, that the Son of God is a creature of a ſuper-eminent nature, or a delegated, ſubſtituted God, produc'd before the world's creation, and that he himſelf created the world; this notion is, I think, as abſurd as the former.

It ſeems contrary to all the reaſon in the world, to affirm that a finite, contingent, temporary, periſhable, and originally nothing Spirit, ſhould yet be the being, by whom, and for whom all things are ſaid to be created, that are in heaven and earth, viſible and inviſible; whether

ther they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers; and that by him all things conſiſt: unleſs you ſay, that a being limited in his eſſence and operations, is capable of exerting any action of an infinite, omnipotent being; which is vaſtly more abſurd, than to affirm, that a worm is capable of performing all the actions of the moſt perfect angel in heaven.

Here I would premiſe, that there's an infinite diſtance betwixt God and the moſt perfect creature he ever made. There is not the leaſt proportion between finite and infinite, nor can any increaſing progreſſion of finite or limited perfections reach thoſe of the infinite Spirit, any ſooner than nothing added to infinity (as I have already hinted) can ever conſtitute any number whatſoever.

To add one finite perfection to another in an endleſs progreſſion, is no more than to make a boundleſs

addition of imperfections; which after all are at an infinite diſtance from an abſolutely perfect being, which is incapable of the leaſt addition to, or diminution of his perfections; or would be no longer God, or a neceſſary ſelf-exiſtent being, if there was the leaſt poſſibility of either.

Every finite being is capable of different degrees of perfection, becauſe 'tis finite; but whatever is infinite is incapable of more or leſs, higher or lower, greater or ſmaller in any reſpect. So that if the divine nature and his eſſential perfections differ only in degree from ours, they are indefinite, but not properly infinite.

Indeed it ſeems no leſs than a contradiction to affirm, that an infinite addition of finite, precarious, dependent perfections ſhould ever conſtitute a neceſſary ſelf-exiſtent being; which would be to ſuppoſe God to be infinitely different from himſelf; for

for the moſt perfect creature he ever did, or could make, would be as dependent upon him, as the loweſt in the whole ſcale of beings, and therefore cannot in this reſpect make the leaſt approaches to his unchangeable nature and eſſential perfections.

I. I would now conſider what may be ſaid for the proper divinity of the Son of God, from the repeated aſſurances the ſcriptures give us, that God created all things by him. Which implies,

Either that he was no more than the inſtrument or occaſion of the world's production: or elſe that he was a true, proper, phyſical cauſe of this wondrous effect.

1. To affirm him to be no more than an inſtrument, is to make him no more a proper creator of the world, than the prophets and apoſtles were the true phyſical cauſes of thoſe miracles, which were only the effects of the divine power. And From

From hence it would alſo follow, that God might have firſt created an angel, a man, or worm, and upon any one ſingle thought of the two former, or the leaſt motion of the latter, have produced the world out of nothing. Upon which accounts this angel, man, or worm, would be as truly the world's creator as the Son of God: ſince neither of them were any more than the inſtruments or occaſions of its creation. And even the worm, on this ſuppoſition, would have as truly and really contributed to this wonderful work, as the divine nature of Chriſt. From whence it would alſo follow, that all the ſcriptures ſay of the Son of God in this matter, might, in this ſenſe, have been as truly ſaid of a worm; that all things were made by it, that are in heaven and earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities or powers; that all things were created by it; and by it all things conſiſt. All

which

which conſequences would inevitably follow this ſenſe of the words, that God created all things by Chriſt.

2. If God's creating all things by Chriſt means, that he firſt of all created the divine nature of Chriſt, and then gave him a power to create the world, or to be the true real cauſe of its exiſtence: This ſenſe of the words I would conſider, and in ſo doing endeavour to prove his proper divinity. And

1.) The actions of all beings are ever proportional to their ſeveral natures, powers, and faculties: if we aſcend from the loweſt degree of creatures in the ſcale of beings, to the top of the creation, this will abundantly appear to the conviction of all reaſonable creatures.

We ſee a heap of duſt, or lump of inanimate clay, can never produce thoſe branches, flowers, and fruits, that proceed from the ſeeds of many vegetables, to the wonder of every curious obſerver. Nor are any

any vegetables ever capable of performing the operations of the loweſt ſpecies of inſects. And even innumerable kinds of inſects want thoſe parts and powers that are abſolutely neceſſary to perform what we ſee other inſects produce with inimitable dexterity: yet even theſe, and the higheſt order of inſects, can never reach to the ſagacity of numerous kinds of birds and beaſts, that in ſome things ſeem to vie with man, who is the principal inhabitant of this lower world; but yet want thoſe rational intelligent powers that exalt him ſo much above them, and render him capable of ſerving his creator, and enjoying him for ever.

And doubtleſs the whole angelick order much exceeds the moſt ſagacious man in the world, in their intellectual and moral accompliſhments.

And if we ſuppoſe the Son of God to be no more than a ſuper-angelical ſpirit united to a human body,

body, though his nature, powers, and faculties may be vaſtly ſuperior to that of the higheſt order of angels, yet as long as the difference is not infinite, there is ſtill an infinite diſtance between him and his great creator, in his eſſence, powers, and operations; unleſs we could ſuppoſe what is finite to be equal to infinite, which is impoſſible.

And therefore the world's creation, which is an act of this infinite being, can never be performed by a being infinitely below him: unleſs any greater action, on this ſide a contradiction, can be aſſign'd, that requires an almighty energy to exert it; which I believe will ſcarce ever be done: upon this ſuppoſition I can't ſee, why God might not enable his creatures (though infinitely inferior to himſelf in their powers) to do every thing that he himſelf can do; for what can he do more, than to create this, and an indefinite number of worlds beſides it?

it? And if he can enable any one of them to make one world, he can as eaſily another, and ſo as many worlds as himſelf can produce; which, whether it is conſiſtent with the infinite difference, betwixt a creature and its creator, I muſt leave the impartial world to judge. But,

2.) If this created ſuper-angelical ſpirit (which is all that ſome will allow the Son of God in his divine nature to be) made the world out of nothing (ſince his powers and operations are ever proportional to his nature and eſſence, which yet is infinitely below that of the Supreme Being) then God might have made an indefinite ſeries of ſuperior ranks or orders of ſpirits, whoſe natures and capacities would be indefinitely more perfect than that of the Son of God, and therefore might exert an indefinitely greater power, than was neceſſary to create this world out of nothing.

3.) It

3.) It alſo follows, that the production of the world from nothing would not bear the leaſt proportion to the operations of an infinitely perfect being. And the feebleſt efforts of the loweſt inſect would bear an infinitely greater proportion to the power and energy that created the world, than that could have to any one operation of an infinite agent. And conſequently the ſingle act of creation would be ſo far from proving the exiſtence of an almighty being, that it would not ſo much as amount to a proof of the exiſtence of any one ſuperior to that of the Son of God, in his divine nature; ſince this is no more than he himſelf has effected.

In a word, ſince the actions of all beings are ever proportional to their eſſences, powers and capacities; and the moſt exalted of created beings bear not the leaſt proportion to God's infinite eſſence, and perfections; nothing that the nobleſt

and

and moſt exalted creatures can do, can bear the leaſt proportion to that almighty power that rear'd this world out of nothing.

And we may with infinitely more reaſon ſay, that the vileſt inſect is capable of making all the wonderful diſcoveries lately made of the earth and heaven (ſince their powers and faculties bear ſome proportion to thoſe of the moſt ſagacious creatures) than that any finite created being whatſoever ſhould be capable of exerting that action, by which God made the world out of nothing.

4.) If creation is not an action of almighty power, then we have not any one inſtance of it in ſcripture; for every other action the creature by divine influence ſeems capable of exerting.

It ſeems, I ſay, from this doctrine, of a being firſt created, and then made a creator of all things, that there can be no exertion of almighty power, in any inſtance, but

but might by the ſame power be communicated to creatures; which ſeems to affirm, that a finite may be capable of exerting all the actions of an infinite being, to which it bears not the leaſt proportion. So that if the creation of the world is not an act of almighty power, it muſt be an action that bears no more proportion to the action of an almighty agent, than finite to infinite, which is none at all. And

5.) Since the Son of God created the world, if he was a meer creature, its wondrous fabrick would be ſo far from diſplaying the eternal power and Godhead of its maker, that it would be the effect only of one that is infinitely below the Supreme Being; but how this would be conſiſtent with the perfections the ſcriptures aſcribe to him, I own myſelf at a loſs to comprehend.

II. I might alſo ſhew, how contrary to all the reaſon in the world,

and moſt exalted creatures can do, can bear the leaſt proportion to that almighty power that rear'd this world out of nothing.

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II. I might alſo ſhew, how contrary to all the reaſon in the world,

as well as ſcripture, this doctrine muſt needs be, that aſcribes divine worſhip and religious adoration to a creature. For,

1.) Since every bodily poſture of religious adoration, that is paid to the ſupreme and any ſubordinate being is the very ſame; the difference is entirely in the intention of the mind, or in the internal ſentiments of the worſhippers of thoſe different objects of adoration, which muſt ever be proportional to the dignity or excellency of their natures.

From whence it follows, that if the Son of God has not ſupreme, but delegated perfections, which can bear no other proportion to thoſe which are truly and ſtrictly divine, than what finite bears to infinite, he can claim only that religious worſhip, which has the ſame proportion to the worſhip of the Supreme God, as a creature to its creator, or as finite to infinite; which would ſcarce amount to any religious

gious adoration, or at moſt but an empty ceremonious compliment. So

2.) If this religious worſhip, that is paid to the Son of God, bears the leaſt proportion to that of the Supreme God; then God would have given a part of his glory to one of his creatures. And if he might give one degree of it, why not more, and conſequently why not all, if he commands it? (ſince it depends entirely in the opinion of the Unitarians on a divine command) But what would this be but to exalt the creature above the creator?

But if God cannot give his glory to his creatures, then the reaſon of divine worſhip depends upon the nature and perfections of the adorable object, and not on any command whatſoever.

3.) If the idolatry of the heathen world lay in paying religious worſhip to creatures, without a divine expreſs command; then it might have been made lawful, on this ſup-

 poſition,

poſition, to have paid divine homage to ſtocks and ſtones, or the loweſt and meaneſt parts of the creation.

Perhaps it will here be ſaid, that the loweſt rank of creatures in the ſcale of beings cannot do us any good offices, as being ſo much below us, and therefore cannot be proper objects of religious adoration.

But the anſwer is obvious, that God may eaſily make the meaneſt of his creatures, both the inſtruments of his juſtice and mercy to mankind. He might, I ſay, have given the loweſt orders of created beings a power to do us good or hurt; and upon that account, have obliged us to give them religious adoration. Upon which ſuppoſition, and if the Pagan idolatry conſiſted entirely in paying religious worſhip to creatures (the ſun, moon, or ſtars,) without a divine command, I can't ſee why the *Galatians* ſhould be charged with it, purely for doing ſervice to them, which by nature

are not Gods,[u] which a late author renders, unto Gods which have no being in nature, or in reality have no being, τοῖς μὴ φύσει ϑεοῖς.

But I believe it will be no eaſy matter to ſhew, where the Apoſtle uſes φύσις for nature in general, or the ſyſtem of natural beings: which τοῖς μὴ φύσι would have ſufficiently expreſs'd. And I think φύσει does always in this epiſtle to the *Galatians*, and in all St. *Paul*'s other writings, ſignify *by* nature, and not *in* nature; as I could eaſily ſhew in many inſtances. And therefore that author is forced to give up this explication, and has recourſe to another ſolution; that the *Galatians* did ſervice to them which are not by nature Gods, or are ſuch as in the reaſon and nature and truth of things, have not that authority and dominion, which is vainly aſcribed to them. Whereas Chriſt is inveſted with a true divine power

[u] *Gal.* iv. 8.

and authority; and therefore may juſtly be made the object of worſhip, which the other could not.

But I believe, as one obſerves, it will be hard to find this ſenſe of φύσει in ſcripture: and that author's three inſtances are either nothing to the purpoſe, or directly againſt him. *Do by nature*, that is, by the light of nature, *things contained in the law*,[w] is nothing to the purpoſe. And *Jews by nature*, that is originally, and by deſcent.[x] And *by nature*, that is by birth, *children of wrath*, τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς,[y] even good men are not born good, or godd by nature. This is the only natural ſenſe of the word φύσει, and therefore what the Apoſtle here means, when he blames the *Galatians* for worſhipping thoſe who by nature are not Gods; that is, that have not an original and inherent divine nature.

Beſides, to ſuppoſe Chriſt to be God in no other ſenſe, than as he is

[w] Rom. ii. 14. [x] Gal. ii. 15. [y] Eph. ii. 3.

is made, by God, the ſovereign of the world, is certainly inconſiſtent with this name God, that St. *John* gives him before he had made the world, or any creatures to govern; and the Pſalmiſt could never mean that God was from everlaſting to everlaſting in this ſenſe God or Sovereign, without giving an eternal exiſtence to the ſubjects of his everlaſting dominion; to which none can ſubſcribe, that believe the account that *Moſes* gives of the world's creation.

4.) If our Lord had been only the moſt noble and excellent creature that God ever made, and by a divine command the object of the worſhip of Chriſtians; then we have the utmoſt reaſon to think, that the *Jews*, who were ſuch implacable enemies to Chriſtianity, would in the ſtrongeſt terms in the world have demanded a moſt expreſs and poſitive proof from heaven of this command.

The *Jews* were vaſtly fond, even in the days of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, of the ceremonial parts of their religion; and after their converſion to Chriſtianity, multitudes of them thought circumciſion itſelf abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. And the unconverted part of that wretched nation, upon account of Chriſt's Apoſtles abrogating that, and other poſitive rites of their religion, had the utmoſt averſion to Chriſtianity and the great author of it; and were then, and are ſtill, ſome of the bittereſt enemies he has ever had in the world.

They fondly flatter'd themſelves, they were ſtill God's peculiar people, and were cut to the heart to hear the *Gentiles* called, by Chriſt's Apoſtles, to the ſame glorious privileges with themſelves.

They have been, ever ſince the *Babyloniſh* captivity, irreconcilable enemies to the leaſt appearance of idolatry, and never objected upon that

that account againſt the religion of Jeſus, which they would certainly have done, if he had enjoined them to give ſupreme or ſubordinate worſhip to another God.

Nor do we find that the Apoſtles ever dropt the leaſt word to vindicate themſelves or their religion from this aſperſion. But now, if Chriſt had been only a delegated God, would not this have been the grand charge againſt Chriſtianity, which they would have been continually ringing in their ears? And what could they have ſaid in their own vindication? Could they work miracles, to prove the firſt commandment, or thoſe laws of God's own immediate enacting, that puniſhed idolatry with death, were by his immediate order to be repealed? or would not their profeſſion of the belief of another God, have been an inſurmountable bar to the converſion of *Jews* and *Pagans* to Chriſtianity?

If

If the apoſtles had told the *Jews*, that God might command them to worſhip whatever he pleaſed; might they not as eaſily have replied, that 'tis ſcarce credible, that God ſhould puniſh the worſhip of another God with a temporal death in one part of the inſpired writings, and puniſh for not worſhipping another God with eternal death in the other?

What could the *Jews* and *Pagans* think of ſuch unaccountable inconſiſtency? Would not this have been the moſt popular argument they could have produced againſt Chriſtianity? Chriſt and his apoſtles might have wrought miracles, but could even theſe have convinced them againſt the expreſs words of their law? *If there ariſeth among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or wonder, and the ſign or wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods, which thou haſt not known,*

and

and let us ſerve them; thou ſhalt not hearken to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; but that prophet or dreamer of dreams ſhall be put to death. [y]

And would they not have inſiſted upon the obligations of ſuch a plain commiſſion, and have watch'd all opportunities for its execution? Would they not have charged them with the guilt of ſerving another God, whom their fathers had not known, and upon this account have treated them as blaſphemers?

Nor would Chriſt's being the moſt glorious of all the works of God, the maſter-piece and top of the creation, and his agent and repreſentative in the government of the world, have ever reconciled them to himſelf or his religion, whilſt he made himſelf the object of their religious adoration.

But they could never raiſe the leaſt reaſonable objection againſt worſhipping God manifeſt in the fleſh; when

[y] Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 5.

when they never ſcrupled to worſhip God, inhabiting, in an unconceivable manner, the cloud of glory; and whilſt they had the utmoſt reaſon to conclude the Supreme God was as truly united to the one, as the other.

6. The Son of God, if a creature, can never be lawfully worſhipped, whilſt the firſt commandment ſtands, as an indiſpenſable law, that obliges all mankind to a ſtrict conformity to it, which will be till the repeal of it is plainly proved: which will never be, whilſt the words of our Saviour ſtand upon record; *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.*[z] And to ſay here, that our Lord only means with ſupreme worſhip, is nothing to the purpoſe; for the devil might readily have replied, he never demanded ſupreme worſhip (as his anſwer to the Son of God, that all this world's riches, honours,

[z] Matt. iv. 10.

honours, and glory were given him, evidently implies) but only a lower degree of worſhip; from which the text our Lord cites could not exclude him, and which the devil might, and would, no doubt have immediately ſuggeſted, if it had been in the leaſt to his purpoſe: nor does our Lord reply to the devil here, that he had no more right to religious worſhip than the Pagan heroes, becauſe he never could produce a command from heaven to that purpoſe: for then our Lord would have told him in the plaineſt words; *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him whom God has commanded thee to worſhip, and no other:* But inſtead of that, he ſays, *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; and does not lay all the blame upon the devil's falſely pretending a command from heaven to be worſhipp'd, of which he could not produce the leaſt proof.

I know

I know it is here ſaid, that to direct all our prayers, praiſes, and petitions primarily to the Father, through the merits and mediation of the Son, is undoubtedly upon all hypotheſes right and ſufficient in practice.

To which I anſwer, that if we addreſs the Father through the Son, we worſhip the Son, or we do not worſhip him.

If we give him no direct divine worſhip, we give up the divine authority of ſeveral texts of ſcripture that lay us under indiſpenſable obligations to pay him religious adoration: for *all the angels of God are commanded to worſhip him*;[a] and *all men muſt honour the Son, as they honour the Father.*[b] *To him every knee muſt bow*;[c] and *bleſſing, honour, glory and majeſty, dominion and power, are to be aſcribed to him for ever and ever.*[d] To which I could add many other ſcrip-

[a] Heb. i. 6. [b] John v. 23.
[c] Philipp. ii, 10. [d] Rev. v. 12, 13.

ſcriptures: and till thoſe texts are invalidated, or ſhewn to have another meaning than what they ſeem to ſignify, thoſe who are now for not giving the Son of God any direct worſhip at all, may as well deny the worſhip of God the Father, as of his only begotten Son.

But now if we really worſhip him (ſince 'tis only in the opinion of the Unitarians inferior worſhip, that we give him) we can never be ſaid to worſhip the Father through him, to whom we cannot give ſubordinate worſhip; which cannot without blaſphemy terminate on the Supreme God and Father of all: the ſcriptures know of but one worſhip, and one foundation of it.

And therefore the worſhip of the Son of God muſt be the ſame with the Father's, and founded upon the ſame claim of true divinity; and on his infinite ſuperiority to all creatures, and his diſtinguiſhing titles, and incommunicable perfections.

tions. And really it ſeems no eaſy matter, to give a tolerable deſcription of mediate worſhip, that terminates on God the Father; for if it is ſupreme, it cannot be given to the Son of God; and if ſubordinate, it ought not to be paid to God the Father: and ſo it is neither ſupreme nor ſubordinate; and what ſort of worſhip that is, I cannot conjecture. But I proceed,

III. To conſider another error of the modern Unitarians, which I would next examine. The far greater part, if not all the patrons of the inferiority of Chriſt to the Supreme God, ſeem to inſinuate he only aſſumed a human body without a human ſoul; and ſo he could neither be God nor man, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the expreſſions: but this opinion is contrary to ſeveral texts of ſcripture, which call him the Son of man, and man in a proper ſenſe; and inform us that *in all things it behoved him to be*

be made like unto his brethren;[e] that *he grew in knowledge as well as ſtature*;[f] which cannot, without the utmoſt abſurdity, be affirmed of the divine nature of the Son of God, that laid the wondrous ſcheme of the world's formation out of a chaos, and contrived with inimitable wiſdom the innumerable kinds of beings in the univerſe.

Matter, we very well know, is no more capable of ſenſation or perception, than our ſouls are of increaſing in bulk and ſtature.

And I think a being that created and ſtill upholds that world he firſt made, can by no means be ſaid to increaſe in knowledge: the ſoul therefore, that improved in knowledge, as its body, to a greater maturity, cannot be the divine nature of the Son of God.

A human ſoul is, without doubt, the proper ſeat of a finite and limited underſtanding; and was the ſubject of thoſe paſſions and affec-

[e] Heb. ii. 17. [f] Luke ii. 52.

tions which manifeſtly appeared in Chriſt, when before his ſufferings he ſaid, *my ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death:*[g] and the divine nature united to the whole human nature of Chriſt may be as eaſily conceived to be one perſon, as the ſoul of man, with the body, conſtitutes one man, which we readily grant, though the manner of this union is incomprehenſible, and is one of thoſe ſecrets of infinite wiſdom, of which we have not the leaſt idea, either from the light of nature or revelation. But the thing itſelf is as evident as the experience of the whole world can make it; though the union of one ſpirit with another is more conceivable, than with matter.

But there are other reaſons that ſtrongly conclude, that he, whom the ſcriptures ſo often call a man, could never be truly ſo, by a ſuperangelical nature, ſupplying in his

[g] Matt. xvi. 28.

his body the place of an informing ſoul. For,

1. The ſeveral kinds of both bodies and ſpirits conſiſt of a collection of their principal, diſtinguiſhing properties, ſince their real eſſences are unknown; and if theſe in the divine nature of Chriſt, are eſſentially different from the known properties of human ſouls, then the union of his divine nature to a human body cannot conſtitute a man.

Now that the divine nature, that created all human ſouls, is eſſentially different from all thoſe creatures he firſt produced out of nothing, muſt be granted, unleſs we ſay the creature does not eſſentially differ from its creator.

2. If the union of any ſpirit whatſoever (though never ſo different from a human ſoul) would make a true and proper man; then 'tis a human body that properly conſtitutes a man. But if man is a ſubſtance compounded of ſoul and

body, and the ſoul is by far the the more noble and excellent part of man, the denomination of a man muſt principally conſiſt of the properties of the moſt valuable part of himſelf. And therefore in this view the Son of God muſt be as exalted above the human ſpecies, as his divine nature is ſuperior to the ſoul of man.

3. If the ſuperangelical nature of Chriſt, united to body, makes him in a true and proper ſenſe a man; then any kind of ſpirits whatſoever in the whole ſcale of ſpiritual beings, when united to a human body, would as truly conſtitute a man, as the divine nature of Chriſt, or even a human ſoul, when united to the ſame body.

For if that divine nature that created the world out of nothing, and ſtill ſupports it, is as different from, or as much above a human ſoul, as the loweſt ſpirit in the ſcale of beings, that animates an inſect,

ſect, is below it, then we may as truly aſcribe humanity to the one, if united to a human body, as the other.

But can any thing in the world be more abſurd, than to affirm that the higheſt and loweſt, or any other intermediate rank of ſpirits, when united to a human body, though as different perhaps in themſelves as one finite being can be from another; yet with that body they aſſume ſhould conſtitute the ſame kind or ſpecies, and be all truly and properly men.

4. And by a parity of reaſon it would hence follow, that if the higheſt angel in heaven was united to the meaneſt worm, or any other creature, in the loweſt rank of beings, it might as truly be called a worm, or any other of the vileſt of creatures, whatſoever body it animates, as the divine nature of the Son of God, in union to a human body, could be called a man.

But if by its union with a worm or any other creature, it loſes nothing of its angelick nature, or eſſential properties, but is as much an angel after its union as before it; it muſt be a notorious abuſe of words to call it by a name that ſtands for a being ſo much below it.

5. If the divine oracles aſſure us the Son of God was made like unto us in all things, then ſurely he muſt reſemble us in the principal part of ourſelves, our ſouls; otherwiſe the meaning here would be only this, that he is like us in the vileſt part of ourſelves, our bodies, but as unlike us in the nobler and immortal part, our ſouls, as the world's creator and preſerver differs from his creatures: which is as much as to affirm, that though he is like us in all things, ſin only excepted, yet he is infinitely unlike us in the principal part of ourſelves; which puts ſuch a ſenſe on this text of ſcripture,

ſcripture, as would plainly make it ridiculous.

6. It is much eaſier to imagine an angel to be turned into a worm; or one of the higheſt intelligences of heaven, upon its union to the body of an inſect, no longer to retain that ſagacity that ſets it at the top of the creation, and to be only capable of animating that vile body it inhabits; than for the divine nature of Chriſt to be no more than the ſoul of an infant, upon its firſt infuſion into its body; or for that glorious being that made the world, and rear'd this vaſt and wondrous ſtructure of the univerſe out of a chaos, and that chaos out of nothing, and hath by a marvellous exertion and aſtoniſhing effect of divine power, brought into being ſuch a vaſt variety of creatures in it, and with inimitable wiſdom contrived them, with an admirable ſubſerviency to each other, and placed them in the moſt comely order;

each one containing a thouſand wonders, that are wrapt up and concealed from the ſearch of the moſt ſagacious mortals.

That when the greateſt archangel in heaven was not able to create the leaſt duſt on the earth, or drop of the ocean, yet it was he that laid the foundations of the earth, and ſpread out the heavens like a curtain; to which the whole earth is leſs by far, than the leaſt duſt is, if compared to this globe of earth and water; and that continually encounters us with the monuments of his power and goodneſs, that preſent themſelves to every ſenſe: That this moſt powerful, wiſe and glorious being, ſhould, the very moment of his aſſuming a human body into a perſonal union with himſelf, become as void of wiſdom and power, and every other perfection, as the ſoul of an infant, can't, I ſay, merit the belief of any reaſonable creature.

Or that he by whom all things conſiſt, and by the ſame almighty energy, firſt produced the world, and every moment prevents its return to its original nothing; and hinders the mutual claſhing of its different parts and principles, which would elſe run into infinite diſorders: Is it in the leaſt, I ſay, probable, that this divine Spirit, that in his ſeparate ſtate could do every thing on this ſide a contradiction, (if creation proves as much) ſhould upon his union to matter loſe his eſſential properties, and ſink into the weakneſs and impotency of an infant?

That he who has univerſal nature at his command and diſpoſe, and has appointed the ordinances of heaven, and made the celeſtial bodies to roll about us; without whoſe powerful influence, as they could never give themſelves being at firſt, ſo they could never have put themſelves

ſelves into motion; nor can they now of themſelves continue one moment to move forwards in their proper orbits, unleſs he continually interpoſes to retain them in the courſe where he firſt placed them; and which of themſelves they would inſtantly deſert, and move ſtill further from us, without ever viſiting us, unleſs he reſtrained them, and contrary to their natural tendency kept them always circulating in their proper orbits, by his will and power, without which the whole frame of nature would fall to pieces.

That he, who has made our bodies with inimitable wiſdom, and animated them with ſouls of a vaſtly more excellent nature: and finally, that he whoſe power and wiſdom all the operations of nature in the greater and leſs worlds proclaim; that this glorious perſon, I ſay, ſhould upon his aſſuming a human body into a ſtrict union with himſelf,

ſelf, ſink inſtantly as much below himſelf, as the ſoul of an infant is below the world's creator and preſerver, looks more like a contradiction than a myſtery.

But we live in an age where ſome men will affirm any thing to ſerve an hypotheſis, and dare venture to palm the greateſt abſurdities upon the world without the leaſt ſhame and confuſion, and turn the ſcriptures into any ſhapes for their purpoſe. And yet they are the men, that think themſelves the only maſters of reaſon, and true interpreters of ſcripture, and reckon all others that differ from them, to be wrapt in clouds of groſs ignorance and darkneſs.

But here it is objected, that the angels that appeared to *Abraham*, and *Lot*, are called men, from their aſſuming a human form, though they were really embodied angels; and by a parity of reaſon the Son of God might be called a man, when his

his ſuperangelical nature was united to a human body.

To which I anſwer, That the ſcripture calls them angels as well as men; and if there is the leaſt parity in the two inſtances, it muſt be ſaid of the angels, as of the Son of God, that they were like unto us in all things, which I imagine none that believe the ſcriptures will affirm; which plainly diſtinguiſh the nature of angels, from that of the ſouls of men, in that they expreſsly tell us that our Lord aſſumed the nature of men, and not of angels: and therefore, as it cannot with the leaſt pretence to truth be ſaid of angels, that retaining their angelick natures, power, and faculties, they are like unto us in all things; ſo neither can it be true of the Son of God (till his divine nature and perfections and all his powers and faculties are exchanged for ours) that he is like unto us in the

the principal, and therefore not ſurely in every part of ourſelves.

So that this ſeems to be an opinion, that ſcarce leaves the Son of God any true and proper divinity to inhabit his humanity; unleſs a a creature, who is infinitely below his creator, may be truly and properly divine: or humanity for his divinity to inhabit, unleſs a body without a human ſoul, or an organized clod of earth, may be called by that name.

IV. The ſcriptures aſcribe the ſame names, titles, attributes, and perfections, to Father, Son and Spirit. And if for inſtance omnipotence and omniſcience, when applied to the two latter, muſt be taken in a limited ſenſe, and mean only that they can do and know all that concerns their office, and no more; then by a parity of reaſon may any man, who is thus qualified for his office or buſineſs, though in innumerable other caſes he may be both impotent

impotent and ignorant, yet be omnipotent, and omniſcient.

So theſe and other attributes in this ſenſe muſt mean ſomething as different from what they are in God the Father, as he is from a creature, or finite from infinite. Therefore it would ſeem extremely ſtrange, that when none more expreſſive and ſignificant characters of God can be deviſed, than ſeveral of thoſe which are applied to Chriſt, they muſt be underſtood in a limited ſenſe, and only as the characters of a being infinitely below him, that has a precarious exiſtence, and dependent powers, and who is neither ſo perfect in his nature, but the Father may, when he pleaſes, create another equal, or one indefinitely ſuperior to him.

I own I have too great a veneration for the inſpired writings, to imagine that the Spirit of God ſhould aſcribe the ſame titles, attributes and perfections in the ſtrongeſt terms to the

the Son of God, and yet mean them in a ſenſe indefinitely below the dignity of the divine nature, and his eſſential perfections; which ſeems to be an unparallel'd perverting the common meaning of words, and leaving mankind in the utmoſt uncertainty, in a matter of no ſmall importance.

And if we are infidels in this great article of the divinity of the Son of God, becauſe our reaſon cannot comprehend it, the ſame reaſon would make us infidels in many points of natural religion.

That light of nature, which obliges us to acknowledge the divine being, and his adorable perfections, obliges us alſo to acknowledge them to be incomprehenſible, as well as the doctrine of the ever-bleſſed Trinity in Unity. If we have recourſe to our natural reaſon alone, for the explaining the myſteries of the divine nature and his natural incommunicable perfections, as well as the

the divinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, we impoſe a task upon it to which it was no ways equal; but if we ſet our reaſon to examine into the principles and grounds of our believing both the one and the other, it will ſoon tell us, there is a God of infinite perfection; and that we are obliged to believe whatever he reveals to us, and to receive it as an infallible truth; even tho' it is, as to the manner of it, like God himſelf, above our comprehenſion. And ſince God muſt be confeſſed to be one great myſtery, perhaps nothing can be revealed of him, but what is incomprehenſible. And it may be that all the endeavours that have been uſed to explain ſome of the great articles of natural and revealed religion, that concern God and his attributes, have only made them the more obſcure.

And though it may be poſſible to evade and put another ſenſe upon ſome of the ſcriptures, that ſeem

to

to give the ſame titles and attributes, and to aſcribe the ſame perfections to both Father and Son, yet others ſeem to be unanſwerably concluſive. And I think ſtronger texts cannot be deviſed to prove the truth of any doctrine, than ſeveral of thoſe which are applied to Chriſt: all which if they muſt be taken in a limited ſenſe, it will be hard to prove the God and Father of Chriſt, with the ſame titles, attributes, and perfections, to be the ſupreme God.

For he might on this hypotheſis have been the loweſt of an indefinite ſeries of ſuperior beings to Chriſt, which the prime cauſe of all had created; and as much a creature as the Son of God himſelf, ſince the very ſame perfections are aſcribed to both: And to create the Son of God, would be no more an act of almighty power, than for him to create the world; ſince if the two beings are creatures, there cannot be an infinite difference in

their actions; and the eternal power and Godhead of the firſt cauſe would be no otherwiſe diſcovered by the work of his hands, than by creating the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt, who by him created the viſible and inviſible worlds.

I preſume that the ſentiments of many of the churches of Chriſt in all ages agreed in this, that the angel of the covenant, or of the divine preſence, was the Meſſiah or Saviour of the world. And if we examine what the ſcripture ſays of this angel; we ſhall find[s] that one of the angels that appeared to *Abraham*, was the angel of the covenant, who is every where in that chapter called Lord, which the Septuagint in the firſt verſe calls θεὸς. So in *Exodus* 'tis ſaid, *the angel of the Lord appeared to Moſes in a flame of fire out of the buſh.*[t] And in the ſixth verſe he ſays, *I am the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob.* So 'tis

[s] Gen. xvii. 2. [t] Exod. iii. 2.

'tis ſaid, *the angel of the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven,*[u] *and ſaid, Lay not thy hand upon the lad (Iſaac,) for now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not with-held thy ſon from me;*[w] that is, from him who gave him the command to ſacrifice his ſon; whom he demonſtrated that he feared, by his ready obedience to his commands. *And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a ſecond time, ſaying, By myſelf have I ſworn.*[x] All which he did, as the apoſtle tells us, [y] *becauſe he could ſwear by no greater than himſelf:* and what could he then be but the Supreme God? and therefore *Abraham* calls that place *Jehovah jireh,* ~~or the name of the Supreme God.~~ So God tells *Moſes*[z] that he appeared to *Abraham* by the name of God Almighty; *and God ſaid unto Moſes,* I AM *that* I AM; *and he ſaid,*

[u] Gen. xxii. 1, 2. [w] *ver.* 12. [x] *ver.* 16.
[y] Heb. vi. 13. [z] Exod. vi. 3.

Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, I AM *hath ſent me unto you.*[a] All which words cannot be ſpoken by the angel of the covenant, or the Son of God in the name and authority of his Father, or as his repreſentative; for 'tis not the voice of an angel, but of the Lord or Jehovah, who ſpake to *Moſes* in his own name, and not in the perſon of another. 'Tis paſt my skill to comprehend with what propriety a creature can be ſaid to repreſent his creator; and to be called by his names, to whom it bears no more proportion, than finite to infinite; which in reality is none at all.

How can impotence repreſent omnipotence, or ignorance omniſcience? or a finite, dependent, precarious, and originally nothing being repreſent a being that's independent, that exiſts by a neceſſity of nature, and contains in himſelf all perfections, without the leaſt

[a] Exod. iii. 14.

leaſt poſſibility of any addition or diminution? Surely a worm may be ſaid, with infinitely more propriety and truth, to repreſent the greateſt archangel in heaven; or the Son of God himſelf, if he is no more than the moſt exalted of all created beings (betwixt whom there is but a finite diſtance) than he can be ſaid to repreſent his maker, who is infinitely more above him, than he can be above the meaneſt creatures, that God ever made.

Beſides, we never find in ſacred or prophane hiſtory, that ever an ambaſſador of an earthly monarch uſurp'd the titles of his ſovereign; and can we think the infinitely great and glorious God would take it well of the moſt excellent creature he ever made, to call himſelf the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *and Jacob*, and to ſay, I AM that I AM, *viz.* a neceſſary and unchangeable being.

'Tis the conſtant language of angels, when they come with a meſ-

ſage from God to this lower world, to expreſs themſelves in this manner, *I am ſent from God, and I am thy fellow ſervant*; but if any created angel ſhould ſay, *I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*; or give himſelf the ſublime titles of the ſupreme being, this would be ſtrangely to perplex the meaning of words, if it has not far worſe conſequences.

'Tis well known the *Jews* could bear nothing, that had the leaſt appearance of idolatry; but I muſt leave it to the impartial world to determine, whether it would not have cauſed the deepeſt prejudices, or would not have tempted them to conclude thoſe men blaſphemers, who preſumed to call one by the diſtinguiſhing names and titles of the world's creator; even whilſt they knew him to depend as much upon him, as the meaneſt worm, and to be infinitely below him.

Perhaps

Perhaps it will here be replied, that earthly monarchs are called God's vicegerents or repreſentatives, as they govern under him, and by his commiſſion; and the Son of God repreſents him as he is conſtituted by and under him, the ſovereign of the world.

But as ambaſſadors never call themſelves by the names and titles of princes, which would be thought to be an unpardonable inſolence, even though they repreſent their perſons: nor were the greateſt monarchs of the world ever known to uſurp the diſtinguiſhing titles of the ſupreme being. And if the Son of God was no more than a dignified creature, it would be infinitely more abſurd, for him to take upon him the names and titles of the moſt high God, than for the meaneſt man upon earth to give himſelf the moſt honourable titles of the greateſt of the ſons of men.

The next text of ſcripture I would mention, is that illuſtrious paſſage of St. *Paul* to the *Philippians*,[b] *Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who being in the form of God*; &c. that is, as truly and eſſentially God, by being in the form of God, as after his incarnation he was a true and real man. 'Twill be no eaſy matter to explain how he who was in the form of God, ſhould at the ſame time be a being infinitely below him, and yet in the form of a ſervant be like a man in all things; or indeed how there can be ſuch an infinite difference in the ſenſe of form, in the firſt and laſt place: or why he ſhould not as much partake of the divine nature in the form of God, as of the human nature in the form of a ſervant.

He could not be in the form of God, as he was the perſon by whom God created all things, by whom he

[b] Philipp. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

he governs all things, and by whom he appeared to *Adam*, to the Patriarchs, and to *Moſes*. For then how could he be ſaid to be ἐν μορφῇ θεῦ ὑπάρχων at the moment he became man and was incarnate, becauſe the world was ſome thouſands of years before created by him: nor could he be ſaid, when he became man, to be ἐν μορφῇ θεῦ ὑπάρχων, exiſting in the form of God, becauſe he is ſuppoſed to appear to *Adam*, the Patriarchs and *Moſes* in God's ſtead many ages before his incarnation. Nor can I find in any ſcripture inſtance where the form of God is put for his repreſentative: and therefore I think 'tis much more probable, that the form of God here muſt have the ſame relation to God, as the form of a ſervant to a ſervant: and if our Lord became the latter, he was as certainly the former; and was as much in the likeneſs of God before, as he was of man after his incarnation.

Indeed

Indeed if Chriſt was really the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, or if it might truly be ſaid of him, *I am that I am*, and that 'twas he that told *Moſes*, that he could not ſee his face; if, I ſay, he ſaid all this of himſelf, then he could be no other than the ſupreme being; but if he is ſuppoſed to ſpeak in the name and perſon of the Father, and was only his repreſentative, agent or viceroy in the government of the world, I muſt again beg an inſtance from ſcripture, where the moſt high God has ever given any creature a commiſſion to call himſelf by his names and titles; or where any other being ever preſumed to aſſume to himſelf the name and perſon of God; or why does he never ſay, I am God the Father, as he might have ſaid upon this hypotheſis?

Again, *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God:* which, as ſome will tell us, means no more than

that

that he did not catch at, or vehemently deſire to be held in equal honour with God; referring theſe words to his humbled, not exalted ſtate. But as this paſſage recommends the Son of God, as the moſt illuſtrious pattern of humility, that was ever given the world, ſo ſure am I, it could be no inſtance of it, for a delegated God or ſubordinate agent in the world's creation, not to covet divine honours, which would have been a more extravagant piece of pride than ever Lucifer himſelf was guilty of; or how indeed can it be an eminent pitch of humility for a creature, not to covet earneſtly that majeſty and authority, which it would be an unparallel'd affront to the ſovereign of the world, for any but himſelf to claim?

I would next mention the words of our Lord to the *Jews*, *Before Abraham was, I am*;[c] which implies, I think, not only that our Lord

[c] John viii. 58.

Lord was before *Abraham* and all generations, or preſent with the Father before all ages or time itſelf commenc'd: he muſt, I ſay, mean more than his bare exiſtence before *Abraham*, which (as one obſerves) would elſe have been no more, than what ſeems to be the general opinion of the Jewiſh Doctors * in his time, that all human ſouls were concreated with the world: but his words rather imply his neceſſary and eternal exiſtence, or as the Septuagint renders the laſt words of *Deut.* xxxii. 39. *I am he*, by ἐγώ εἰμι *I am*, that is *I am God*; as it does alſo the laſt words of *Pſalm* xc. 2. *from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art* (σὺ εἶ) that is, *thou art God.*

Our Lord did not here ſpeak in his Father's name, whoſe ſtyle in the ſcripture is, *I am*: for it would be a ſtrange way of proving his exiſtence before *Abraham*, becauſe he ſpake then to the *Jews* in his Father's

* ix. 2, 3.

Father's name, who exiſted before *Abraham* by a neceſſity of nature; for our Lord does not ſay, before *Abraham* was, he repreſented him, whoſe name was *I am*; but at that very inſtant he ſays of himſelf, *Before Abraham was, I am.*

Nor is it in the leaſt probable but that if our Lord had only here meant, he was the perſon that ſpake, not in his own but in the name of God, he would have expreſs'd as much in the plaineſt manner to the *Jews*, and not have left them the leaſt grounds in the world to believe him a blaſphemer, by making himſelf the ſupreme God, inſtead of his repreſentative.

I would next mention that text, *I and my Father are one*,[d] *i. e.* in power, as the Unitarians themſelves confeſs. But how it can be ſaid of a being that is infinitely below the ſupreme God, that he is one with him in power, and yet their reſpective

[d] John x. 30.

tive powers be to each other as finite and infinite, is to me, I confeſs, incomprehenſible; or how an infinite being can communicate his power to a creature, whoſe finite and limited nature muſt render him as incapable of receiving it, as all the other infinite perfections of the Deity.

His eſſence therefore muſt be ever proportionable to his power, which can be no leſs than divine, if *what things ſoever the Father doth,* (ταῦτα) *the ſame things doth the Son* (ὁμοίως) *in the ſame manner,*[c] or with the ſame power, energy and efficacy; though as Mediator, he was ſo entirely devoted to his Father's will, that he could no more act in oppoſition to it, than God could even lie, or deny himſelf; yet it being by him, as God, that all things were created, he could not want the leaſt aſſiſtance to do every thing elſe on this ſide a contradiction.

I would

[c] John v. 19.

I would next to the ſcripture proofs before cited, add ſome other texts, where the Son is called God; or an eternal, immutable, omnipreſent, omniſcient, almighty being, and not barely the world's univerſal ſovereign; for ſupremacy implies a ſubordination of beings to one another, and a right of dominion over the ſubordinate; and, with reſpect to the Divinity, is founded on creation, preſervation, and redemption. But who will ſay that God was not as much and truly God, before the world was made, as ſince? or that he would not as certainly continue to be God, tho' all his creatures ſhould have been annihilated, and no world left for him to govern? Or does not the ſcripture plainly declare him to be God *from everlaſting to everlaſting?* and is it not plain from hence, to a demonſtration, that the word God ſignifies more than the ſupreme and ſubordinate governor of the world? Our

Our Lord himſelf tells us that he was *God in the beginning*,[f] or before the world was formed or framed: and not that God firſt made the world by him, and then made him a God by giving him dominion over it.

Beſides, how improbable is it that the word God, in the ſame verſe, ſhould ſtand for as different ideas as finite and infinite, eſpecially where there is not the leaſt hint given of the two infinitely different ſenſes of that word?

Nor is it in the leaſt to the purpaſe to ask here, how can God be ſaid to be with himſelf? while we ſay, there are three divine perſons neceſſarily exiſting in the ſame ſubſtance, and therefore by a neceſſity of nature with one another from eternity.

So *Gen.* xxxi. 11—13. *And the angel of God ſpake unto me (Jacob) in a dream; I am the God of Bethel;* by

[f] John i. 1.

by which I believe moſt expoſitors underſtand the Son of God.

And if the name God implies perfect knowledge and conſummate wiſdom, power and might irreſiſtible, eternity, immutability and omnipreſence, creative power, ſupremacy, independence and neceſſary exiſtence; by which the ſupreme God has diſcover'd himſelf to the world, as may be eaſily prov'd from many texts of ſcripture; then I can't ſee why the Angel of the covenant, in his being call'd by his name, ſhould not repreſent him in all his divine perfections; which how a creature infinitely below his maker can be ſaid to do, is I confeſs to me incomprehenſible. Or how a finite, dependent being, and mere creature can be call'd the mighty God,[g] that has none of the attributes and perfections of the Deity in himſelf; and is no more really God, than any monarch upon earth in an inferior ſenſe may be ſaid to be.

[g] *Iſaiah* ix. 6.

The laſt text I ſhall mention under the word God, is *Rom.* ix. 5. *Chriſt came, who is over all God bleſſed for ever*; ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. The whole verſe is, *whoſe are the fathers*, or the *Jews*, the ſeed of *Abraham* and the Patriarchs; *of whoſe family, as to his human nature, was born Jeſus Chriſt* the ſon of God, who in his divine nature was *God over all bleſſed for ever*. The greek words ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς cannot be of ambiguous conſtruction, nor is the word θεὸς wanting in many MSS. (ὁ ὢν evidently referring to the immediately preceding words, *Chriſt came*) Dr. *Mills* affirming it to be in all the manuſcript copies of the new teſtament, and the whole ſtream of ancient writers repreſenting it as belonging to the Son, or expreſſing the divine nature, as the former part of the verſe declares his deſcent in is human nature.

Nor can the words (*God bleſſed for ever*) mean only a grateful exclama-

clamation, for the bleſſings confer'd upon the *Jewiſh* nation, and particularly for the invaluable bleſſing of the *Meſſiah*.

For, as Dr. *Whitby* very well obſerves, the phraſe occurs many times in the old teſtament, but in every place εὐλογητὸς goes before, and the article is annex'd to the word θεὸς; nor, in the New Teſtament, are the words, when thus underſtood, ever immediately joined together otherwiſe;[a] which is a demonſtration that θεὸς εὐλογητὸς *(God be bleſſed)* is an unuſual and unnatural conſtruction. And if theſe words, ſaith the ſame learned doctor, are ſpoken by the Spirit of God concerning Chriſt, the argument hence to prove him truly and properly God, is invincible.

But if, when apply'd to the Son of God, they can ſignify no more than that he is the bleſſed ſovereign of the world by God's appointment; then, whenever they are apply'd to the God of the *Jews* both in the old

[a] Luk. i. 68. 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.

and new teſtament, they will ſcarce, I doubt, prove him to be any more ſtrictly and properly divine, than his only begotten ſon.

To this I may add, that the divine attributes are aſcrib'd to the Son of God; as,

1. Omniſcience; for he is ſaid to know all things, and to ſearch the hearts and reins of the children of men,[a] which are the ſtrongeſt proofs the ſcriptures give us of the divine omniſcience; and if theſe will not prove him omniſcient, it will be no eaſy matter to prove the God and Father of Chriſt to be ſo, who has been the immediate conveyer of his knowledge to him; but even his own knowledge may be deriv'd to him from a ſuperior being, till we aſcend to the firſt cauſe and fountain of knowledge, and all other perfections. I might alſo,

2. Conclude the Son of God to have an eternal immutable exiſtence from *Heb.* i. 10, 11, 12. *Thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens*

[a] Rev. ii. 23.

are

are the works of thine hands; they ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt, and thy years ſhall not fail. Where *Lord*, as is by others obſerv'd, in *ver.* 10. does, without doubt, as much relate to the Son of God, as *God*, in *ver.* 8. and σὺ in the latter verſe exactly anſwers to σοῦ in the former. And if any ſhould ſay, that theſe words, and the cii. Pſalm, from whence they were taken, do not belong to the Son of God, but the Father only, I think it would on that ſuppoſition be no eaſy matter to explain (ſince the ſame *Lord* runs through that Pſalm from the beginning to the end) how expreſſions belonging to none but the Father only ſhould be brought as proofs of the greatneſs of the Son, or what relation the immutability or ſtability of the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has to the ſcope ad deſign of the author here, which was, by the illuſtrious inſtance of his creating the earth and heavens, to demonſtrate his infinite ſuperiority to angels, to inſinuate a ſenſe of his almighty pow-

er and eternal exiſtence, and of their imperfections in compariſon: a work here aſcribed to the Son of God by the author to the *Hebrews*, in the ſame ſtyle in which it is affirm'd of the God of the *Jews*, in many places of the old teſtament. I might alſo

3. Aſcribe omnipreſence, another attribute of the ſupreme God, to his Son, for *by him all things conſiſt*, and therefore he muſt be commenſurate to the univerſe; and if he is almighty, he muſt be able with infinite eaſe to create an indefinite number of worlds, beyond the utmoſt bounds of this; and then it might be ſaid with the ſame reaſon, that by him all theſe new worlds conſiſt.

Beſides, if filling heaven and earth is one of the beſt ſcripture arguments for the immenſity of the God of the *Jews*, why may we not as well conclude the Son's omnipreſence, from his actual preſence with his church and people upon earth, even whilſt he is in heaven,[c] and is ſaid to [d] *fill all in all?* Elſe we ſhall

[c] Mat. xxviii. 20. [d] Eph. i. 23.

ſhall find it no eaſy matter to prove from ſcripture, that the God of the *Jews* is the very omnipreſent being that reaſon demonſtrates.

I come in the laſt place to produce ſome ſcripture arguments for the divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, which may be alſo concluded from the divine perfections and works the ſacred oracles aſcribe to him.

Tho' after what I have already ſaid to prove the proper divinity of the Son, I think it will be needleſs to ſay much on this head, and therefore chuſe to refer the reader to the ſeveral judicious treatiſes extant on this ſubject.

I believe it will be granted that the ſame divine ſpirit inſpir'd both the prophets and apoſtles, and that we find ſuch perſonal characters of him in both teſtaments, as abundantly diſtinguiſh him from the Father and Son; and I think the ſcriptures declare him concern'd as an *efficient cauſe* in the world's formation, tho' ſome will tell us he was no more than an *inſtrument* in that work.

But if the ſpirit of God is no more than an inſtrument or occaſion of the world's creation, then even the meaneſt of God's works (if it mov'd upon the face of the waters, and garniſh'd the heavens, and gave being to any one of the human race upon any one of its motions, and in a peculiar manner form'd the body of Chriſt himſelf) might as truly be the author of thoſe wonderful works, as the ſpirit of God according to this notion would be.

And though miracles are ſometimes ſaid to be wrought by men, yet never by any action of theirs that could produce them, but by an immediate exertion of divine power, upon their ſpeaking, or giving ſome ſign that could not have the leaſt phyſical influence upon the miracles wrought by God himſelf, without the leaſt aſſiſtance of one of his creatures.

So the Spirit's immenſity in the moſt elegant manner is deſcrib'd in Pſalm cxxxix. and *ver.* 7. *Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit, or whither ſhall*

ſhall I flee from thy preſence? which ſome would tell us, means no more than the power and preſence of the ſupreme God and Father of all things.

But whilſt other ſcriptures aſcribe perſonal characters to the divine ſpirit, we may reaſonably conclude him here to be more than God's power and efficacy, into which we cannot with any propriety be ſaid to be baptiz'd. And may we not as well be ſaid to be conſecrated to the ſervice of God's wiſdom, goodneſs, juſtice, or any other of his attributes, as his power?

Nor can it be ſaid when the ſpirit of God is call'd a ſanctifier, a reprover, a witneſs, a comforter dwelling in believers, or ſending any one upon any ſpecial errand, conſtituting any perſon to any office, or prohibiting any action, that all this is to be taken only in a metaphorical ſenſe; for this way of interpreting ſcripture, would caſt ſuch a veil upon many hundreds of places of ſcripture, as would make it abſolutely

lutely unintelligible. Beſides, the Spirit is ſaid to *dwell* in his people wherever they are diſpos'd, to *ſearch all things*,[c] *yea the deep things of God*; he knows and is perfectly acquainted with the whole purpoſe and will of God, or all thoſe infinite perfections of the divine nature which no finite created being could ever by its utmoſt ſearch find[f] out or diſcover. He knows all that was ever hid in the divine mind from eternity moſt intimately and exactly, as the ſpirit of a man knows the things that are peculiar to him, or is conſcious of his inward thoughts, deſigns, and intentions. For[g] *What man knows the things of a man*, or his inward thoughts and volitions, *ſave the ſpirit of a man which is in him? Even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the ſpirit of God.*

And as the ſpirit or mind of man knows his own thoughts by an internal conſcious principle, and not by any revelation or external diſcovery, ſo the Spirit is here ſaid to know

[c] 1 Cor. ii. 10. [f] Job. xi. 7. [g] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

know the things of God, or all the divine purpoſes or reſolutions.

In a word, if that being that is the great author of thoſe divine communications that require omnipreſence, omnipotence, and omniſcience; if all this, I ſay, will not give him a juſt claim to proper divinity, then we are utterly at a loſs by what characters and perfections to know or diſtinguiſh God from his creatures. And though the name God ſhould never be apply'd to the Holy Ghoſt in ſcripture, yet if we find him there to be plainly inveſted with the infinite perfections of the deity, we have much more reaſon to believe him truly and properly God, than if we had only his name to prove it, which ſome men know how to wreſt to an infinitely inferior ſenſe and meaning.

And though a divine perſon cannot be the gift of God, as the Spirit is ſaid to be, yet the gifts or graces of the Spirit may be plentifully diſpens'd, without the leaſt appearance of inferiority in the divine perſons;

as may the works of the Spirit, by a perfect agreement and compact between the three perſons, be ſubſervient to thoſe of the Father and Son, without the leaſt proof of an infinite inequality in their natures.

Nor can I ſee in the leaſt how it would follow, that if the ſpirit of God is as conſcious of all that paſſes in the divine mind, as the ſpirit of man is of all his perceptions and volitions, that they muſt be one and the ſame perſon, unleſs it could be prov'd that two perſons could not by any means perfectly underſtand one another, or that 'tis impoſſible for the three divine perſons to be omniſcient.

It may here be expected that I clear this doctrine of a trinity of perſons in the unity of nature or eſſence, from the charge of a direct contradiction.

To which I anſwer, It can never be prov'd a contradiction, till I affirm that the three divine perſons are one perſon, or that 'tis prov'd to be impoſſible for God to be three

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and one in any inſtance whatſoever; to determine which, I muſt know all the poſſible differences the divine being can contain in himſelf, which no one as yet has ever pretended to enumerate.

If the ſcriptures aſcribe divine perfections to the three perſons, and yet ſuppoſe them by an infinitely cloſe union to conſtitute but one God, we muſt then believe a trinity in unity to be neceſſary in the divine moſt perfect nature; upon which ſuppoſition it would be as great a contradiction to ſuppoſe the non-exiſtence of either of them, as of all, ſince they all exiſt by the ſame abſolute neceſſity.

And though reaſon does not prove this neceſſary exiſtence, yet reaſon itſelf will tell us, that whatever ſcripture affirms, we ought to believe, becauſe we are ſure it comes from one who is truth itſelf, and cannot deceive us.

But if it is here objected, that the union of an omnipotent being to the human nature of Chriſt, is unintelligible,

intelligible, and therefore contrary to reaſon, I would ask theſe gentlemen, that argue after this manner, to explain to me the union of their ſouls and bodies: let them tell me by what ligament two ſubſtances of ſuch vaſtly different natures are united; let them deſcribe the nature and reaſon of thoſe laws by which they act on each other; or what is the band that unites the ſeveral parts of their ſouls (ſuppoſing them to be extended) to each other? Or ſuppoſe the Son of God to be no more than a ſuper-angelical nature commenſurate to the univerſe, which he muſt be, if by him all things conſiſt: I deſire to know on that hypotheſis, how the whole ſuper-angelical could be ſaid to be united to his human nature, when it reaches many millions of its bulk beyond it. Let theſe gentlemen, I ſay, clearly ſolve this difficulty before they pronounce the union of the divine nature to the human impoſſible.

I be-

I believe, when all theſe difficulties are explain'd, I may ſafely undertake to ſolve the other. And if I muſt believe nothing, till I have a full comprehenſion of all the different modes, properties, powers and relations of it, I muſt then doubt of or disbelieve the very being of the world and every thing in it, till, as one ſays, I could give a rational account how it could be, either from eternity, or by creation in time; if by creation in time, whether from nothing, or from pre-exiſting uncreated matter, or from the ſubſtance of the deity himſelf: againſt all which there will be as inſuperable difficulties, as againſt the propoſition that Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God is God and Man.

All therefore we have to do, whilſt we are at ſuch a diſtance from the Father of lights, is to know what we can of God and ourſelves, and the relation in which we ſtand to our creator, preſerver and redeemer. And ſince time is ſhort, and 'tis but a very little way that our moſt diligent enquiries

quiries will carry us in the ſearch after truth; and as there is a great difference betwixt the importance and uſefulneſs of ſome points of knowledge and of others, no doubt our chief care and ſtudy ſhould be employ'd about thoſe which are of the greateſt neceſſity, and have the moſt immediate influence upon our practice; the knowledge whereof does moſt exalt and raiſe the mind of man, and has the neareſt connection with the duty that is plainly incumbent on us, with reſpect either to God or our neighbour. The ſtudy of nature might greatly improve and enlarge our faculties, but the ſcriptures are the great repoſitory of that knowledge which is infinitely moſt concerning, which we ought moſt highly to value, and without a competent underſtanding of which we can never thoroughly diſcharge our duty, or conform our lives and actions to the pleaſure of our Maker.

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